MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

AUGUST 2003
#243 • $3

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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Let us know which issue to start with!

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE:
#148, 150-154, 156-157, 159-163, 166, 168-172, 174-175, 178-181, 184-211, 213-239, 241 are as stated above in subscription info. See page after next.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE:
Scene Reports: continuously, with photos!
Interviews: continuously, with photos!
Ad Reservations: call to make sure.
Ad Copy In (with payment): by 15th of previous month–NO LATER!!!
Issue out: by 2nd week of following month.

★★ AD RATES & SIZES!! ★★
1/6 page: (2 3/8" x 5") $30
1/3 page long: (2 3/8" x 10") $85
1/3 page square: (5" x 4 7/8") $100
1/2 page: (7 1/4" x 5") $150
Full page (7 1/4" x 10") $400

AD CRITERIA:
We will not accept major label or related ads, or ads for comps that include major label bands. We reserve the right to refuse ads for any reason at any time. Send ads on paper, properly sized.

CLASSIFIEDS: NEW PRICE! $2 for a maximum of 40 words. No racist, sexist or fascist material. Send typed if possible.

FRONT COVER: Photo by Cathy Paquet. Layout by Mike Thorn
BACK COVER: Photo by Dave Hyde

SELL MRR AT GIGS: Within the US, they're $1.50 each ppd, cash up front. Contact us for non-US orders. Must order 5 or more of the same issue.

NEWSSTAND circulation through Big Top Newsstand Services, a division of the IPA. For more information call (415) 643-0161 or fax (415) 643-2983 or E-mail: Info@BigTopPubs.com. Also available from: No Idea, Sound Idea, Revolver, Get Hip, Smash, Subterranean, Last Gasp, See Hear, Armadillo, Ubiquity, Choke Inc, Desert Moon, and Marginal.
See page 5 for foreign distribution info.

Please send all records, zines, letters, articles, scene reports, photos, subscriptions, interviews, ads, etc., to:
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mrr@maximumrocknroll.com
(use this mainly for comments & letters. Use phone for ads & other business stuff)

TOP 10

For what it's worth (not much), here's some of the MRR crew's current Top 10 (or so...) lists of stuff we review.

TIM BROOKS

DEADLINE-Back for More-LP	SLIME-all LPs
PHOENIX FOUNDATION-These Days-10"	DISCLOSE-Neverending War-EP
GOUKA-12345 Chaos-EP	MARKED MEN-LP
POIKKEUS-Järjeton Maailma-EP	FLIPTOPS-Secrets & Lies-EP
MAD PARADE-Bombs & the Bible-CD	DEFECTOR-Punk System Destroy-EP

NOR COONS

ARTIMUS PYLE-Inheritance-EP	POIKKEUS-Järjeton Maailma-EP
GOUKA-12345 Chaos-EP	WORLD BURNS TO DEATH / SICK TERROR-EP
RAZOR'S EDGE-Thrash March-EP	FUCKED UP-Police-EP
DISCLOSE-Neverending War-EP	HAYMAKER-Fuck America-EP
DEFECTOR-Punk System Destroy-EP	DSB / ASSAULT-live

ARWEN CURRY

CONCLUSION-EP	POIKKEUS-Järjeton Maailma-EP
ADDC / GIANT BAGS OF WEED-split EP	YHTEISKUNNAN YSTÄVÄT?-Natsirunkut-EP
BREAD & WATER-12"	DEADLINE-Back for More-LP
LAYBACKS-Beer-EP	DSB / ASSAULT / FROM ASHES RISE-live
APATIA NO-El Ruido de Antes-LP	SLIME-all LPs

PAUL CURRAN

FREE VERSE-Inventing an Archetype-CD	SLEAZIES-Gonna Operate-45
DEADLINE-Back for More-LP	MENSEN-Oslo City-LP
BLANK FIGHT-CD	BREAD & WATER-12" / APATIA NO-LP
ADDC / GIANT BAGS OF WEED-split EP	V/A-Wenn Kaputt Dann Wir Spass-2xLP
YHTEISKUNNAN YSTÄVÄT?-Natsirunkut-EP	CONCLUSION-EP / RAZOR'S EDGE-EP

JONATHAN FLOYD

MINNEAPOLIS	SAN FRANCISCO
SAN FRANCISCO	MINNEAPOLIS
MINNEAPOLIS	SAN FRANCISCO
SAN FRANCISCO	MINNEAPOLIS
MINNEAPOLIS	SAN FRANCISCO

JEFF HEERMANN

STARVATIONS-One Long Night-CDEP	MOTARDS-Stardom-CD
HOTWIRES-Ignition-CD	PINK & BROWN-Shame Fantasy II-12"EP
THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY-CDEP	VILENTLY ILL-Heal the Earth-LP
COMETS ON FIRE-CD	LUDELLA BLACK & THE MASONICS-EP
MISTREATERS-Hard on the Eyes-45	STUCK-UPS-live

KENNY KAOS

MENSEN-Oslo City-LP	DEMONICS-Dunebuggy Gang-EP
SLIME-all LPs	KNOCKOUT PILLS-Reject Button-LP
HEADFALL ATTITUDES / HELLROUTE 16-EP	MARKED MEN-LP
SLEAZIES-Gonna Operate-45	STIFF LITTLE FINGERS-Wasted Life-LP
MAGGOTS-Let's Go in 69-45	RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS-LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

MISTREATERS-Hard on the Eyes-45	FLYING DUTCHMEN-Live-EP / TEARS-CD
MARKED MEN-LP	SWEET J.A.P.-Virgin Vibe-CD
VILENTLY ILL-Heal the Earth-LP	IF I SHOULD FALL FROM GRACE-film
NAZIS FROM MARS-Fuck You-LP	BLOWTOPS-EP & 45
ROYAL ROUTES-Medium Middle-45	FLIPTOPS-Secrets & Lies-EP

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

Please send us records (2 copies of vinyl, if possible–one for MRR and one for reviewer), or CD-only release. See records section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

RAY LUJAN

BUZZCOCKS-live / TEARS-CD	KNOCKOUT PILLS-Reject Button-LP
FOUR SQUARE-CD / NAZIS ROM MARS-LP	DEADLINE-Back for More-LP
LOST SOUNDS-Demos II-CD	JACKIE-45 / DRONGOS FOR EUROPE-EP
MENSEN-Oslo City-LP / FLIPTOPS-EP	NONE MORE BLACK-File Under Black-LP
DEMINER-CD / SIR KILLALOT-Painting-CD	KICKS-CD / RUTH'S HAT-CD

BOBBY MANIC

WILL RISK

MARKED MEN-LP	WEAK LEADS / ABI YOYOS-split CD
TEARS-CD / FLIPTOPS-Secrets & Lies-EP	FIYA-Recede-EP
FLYING DUTCHMEN-Live-EP	OIL-Better Get It in Your Soul-EP
SLEAZIES-Gonna Operate-45	WHAT HAPPENS NEXT-EP
Moving to Sacramento	BLANK FIGHT-CD

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

MENSEN-Oslo City-LP / LET IT BURN-EP	PANTHERS-Let's Get Serious-12"EP
DEADLINE-Back for More-LP / JACKIE-EP	PHOENIX FOUNDATION-These Days-10"
FUCKED UP-Police-EP / SLIME-LPs	PINK & BROWN-12"EP / ARTIMUS PYLE-EP
LIGHT THE FUSE & RUN / TRANSISTOR TRANSISTOR-LP	V/A-Swami Sound System-LP
NOFX-War on Errorism-LP / CZOLGOSZ-EP	THE NOW-Here Come the Now-LP

DONNA POOLE

SLEAZIES-Gonna Operate-45	CROPKNOX / JUST CAN'T LIVE-split EP
FLIPTOPS-Secrets & Lies-EP	VILENTLY ILL-Heal the Earth-LP
V/A-Urine Stains Across Virginia-EP	MARKED MEN-LP
MISTREATERS-Hard on the Eyes-45	HELLSIDE STRANGLERS-CD
MENSEN-Oslo City-LP	HELLSUCKERS-Tonite Destruction-CD

BRUCE ROEHRS

DSB / ASSAULT-live / A GLOBAL THREAT-EP	DISCIPLINE-Saints & Sinners-LP
LIMECELL-It's Gonna Get Ugly-LP	LAYBACKS-Beer-EP
AGNOSTIC FRONT / DISCIPLINE-split 2xLP	HUMAN WASTE-Allt Gar-EP
GOUKA-12345 Chaos-EP	TO HELL & BACK-Messed Up-45
DEADLINE-Back for More-LP	V/A-Dark Thoughts: Tribute to C.O.C.-EP

MIKE THORN

DSB / ASSAULT-live	V/A-Wenn Kaputt Dann Wir Spass-2xLP
APATIA NO-LP / DIOS HASTIO-EP	FINAL BLOODBATH-Nothing of Reality-EP
BREAD & WATER-12"	FUCKED UP-EP / DISCLOSE-EP
CROPKNOX-EP / POIKKEUS-EP	WORLD BURNS TO DEATH / SICK TERROR-EP
DEFECTOR-EP / MARKED MEN-LP	GOUKA-EP / RIISTETYT-10"

RYAN WELLS

OFF ON OFFICIAL LIBRARY BUSINESS

ZINE TOP TEN

Black Lung #9 / Contravenção #1-5	Clusterfuck #3
Chainbreaker #1	East Village Inky #19
Crude Noise #3 / Nosedive #12	Mylxine #16
Negrita #3	Paping #8 / Wiedzma/Witch #4
Slouch #4	Willful Disobedience

ZINE SHITWORKERS

Anandi	Aragorn
Peter Avery	Michelle Barnhardt
Ben	Angie Beyer
Janelle Blarg	Jerry Booth
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Ariel Celeste	Clayton
Catherine Cook	Rob Coons
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#148/Sept '95. Soda Jerks, Toe Rag, Thorazine, Sacred Straight, Wizo, Opposition Party, Moody Jackson, Adversives, Opción Crucial, Rebel, Rebel, Teen Idols, Walking Ruins.

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#152/Jan '96. Delilah Jacks, Battalion of Saints, Bottom Feeders, Turbonegro, Murder Junkies, Junior, Assfort, Retch Records, Com-Fract, Dead End Kids.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#157/June '96. AAA, The Criminals, Wardance, Heroines, Brain Brats, Rudiments, Chinese Millionaires, Sons Of Hercules, Your Mother, Yellow Scab.

#159/Aug '96. Smugglers, Brand New Unit, Tone Deaf Pig-Dogs, Round Ear Spocks, David Hayes/Very Small Recs, Man Afraid, Blind Side, Vox Populi, Death Wish Kids, Fun People, Fat Drunk & Stupid.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#168/May '97. Cretin 66, Fishsticks, Distemper, Enewetak, UK Subs, Luxo Champ, Jake Sayless, "Pioneers of Punk."

#169/June '97. Hand Skin, Cluster Bomb Unit, Jihad, Purgen, Speed Queens, Remission, Halflings, The Old Man, Deface.

#170/July '97. Bristle, Mine, Tedio Boys, The 4 Cockroaches, Absconded, Meanwhile. Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hoodrat.

#171/Aug '97. Violent Society, Strychnine, Idiots, Knuckle Heads, Race Traitor, Patrick Grindstaff, Misanthropists.

#172/Sept '97. Withdrawals, Judgement, No Motiv, Oppressed Logic, Truents, Left For Dead, Yellowskin, Weird Lovemakers, Smash Your Face, Flatus, Straight Faced, Klaxon, X-It.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#178/Mar '98. Economics issue. Forgotten Rebels, Dirtys, Josh Collins, American Steel, Letterbombs, Gyogun Rend's, Go-Devils, Room 41, Tone Deaf Pig Dogs, Garage Rats.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, Stiletto Boys, All Bets Off, Bonecrusher, Summerjack, Cell Blck 5, DDI, Normals, Pirate Radio issue.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, Third Party, No Class, Skabs.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#213/Feb '01. Fun People, Onward to Mayhem, Ugly Pop, Midnight Evils, Atrocious Madness, Bread & Water, Josh Peach, Zodiac Killers.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#219/Aug '01. "Fix It!" cycling article, Crucial Unit, Lost Sounds, Lombardies, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 1, Casualties, Resinators, *P.U.N.K.*, Slaughter & the Dogs, Anti-Flag, Dontcares, S'Bitch.

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality."

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#228/May '02. 3 Summers Gone, Haymaker, Killed In Action, 31G, Cheetah Chrome, Stardumb, This Computer Kills, Isso•Keh, Strong Intention, Desobediencia Civil, Caustic Christ, Lack of Knowledge.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war scene reports. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, Artcore Fanzine, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#237/Feb '03. Top Ten Records of 2002, "Music as a Weapon: Artists in Wartime," Dirt Bike Annie, Let It Burn, Stockyard Stoics, King Khan & Shrines, 625 Records, Feast Or Famine, Rudimentary Peni, Coachwhips, Self Defense.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. SOLD OUT!

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports,John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, Snakepit zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

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Dear *MRR* readers…

Below you'll find a list of distros in Europe and elsewhere. We've been doing our best to cover as much territory outside of the U$A as we can, but we still need your help in establishing contacts with like-minded punx who are interested in carrying *MRR*. We're providing this list to you in order to let you know where you can currently get your monthly fix of *MRR*, but we're always looking for more help; so if you do a distro, would be interested in selling *MRR* at shows, or just want to go in with a crew of friends to get a cheaper post rate—get in touch and we'll tell you the details! Please note that several of the distributors below are now offering subscription services. If you're not sure, just ask! Thanks again for all your support.

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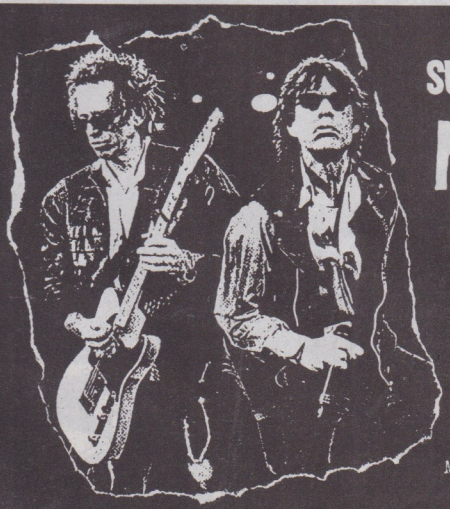

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ACHTUNG!

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MRR COVER INCREASE

next issue

DEAR PUNKS,

WE'RE SORRY TO REPORT THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE EARLY 1997, WE HAVE TO RAISE THE COVER PRICE OF MRR BY A BUCK, STARTING WITH #244. WE KNOW IT SUCKS, AND WE'VE TRIED TO AVOID IT FOR A LONG TIME, BUT SO IT GOES.

YOU CAN STILL GET COPIES OF MRR FOR UNDER $3 EACH BY ORDERING A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION FOR $30. THIS MAY GO UP SLIGHTLY, BUT WE'LL KEEP IT AS LOW AS WE CAN.

THANKS. KEEP IT UP.

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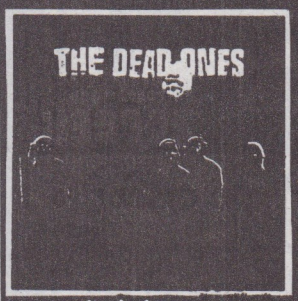

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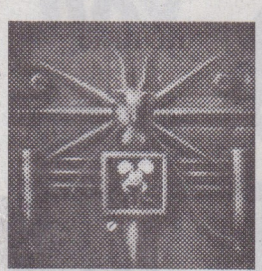

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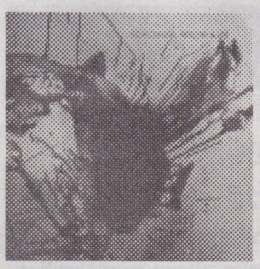

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CD $11.55

THE MANIKINS s/t LP
Fab mod powerpop and punk from late-'70s Australia! Well-known by collectors, they released 3 great 7"s and a cassette-only album before disbanding; this release culls the best of their recordings! Liner notes by singer-guitarist Neil Fernandes. Italian import.

LP $12.40

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THE LEG HOUNDS s/t LP
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18 MAJORITY RULE (VA), DEL CIELO (MD), DEAR DIARY, I SEEM TO BE DEAD (Lou.), PROMISE (Lou.) TAKARU (6 BANDS, YO!)

19 BORN/DEAD, CONGA FURY (Japan), CHAINSAW (Japan), VOETSEK, CASE OF EMERGENCY, DOPPELGANGER (Hella bands, dude!)

25 WxHxNx?, CUT THE SHIT (Boston), ARTIMUS PYLE, THE RITES (also), FUNERAL SHOCK

26 THE CLARENDON HILLS, LATTERMAN (NY), SPEAK-EASY (MA), WEAK LEADS

27 BLUE MONDAY (can.) MENTAL (MA). 5pm show, kids.

AUGUST...

1st TO SEE YOU BROKEN, THE DISKORDS (OR) ← great band!

2nd PLAN 9 (Misfits tribute) PENIS FLYTRAP, PROUD FLESH, FREE VERSE (WA) ← yay!, THE POX (SFDP) (what is SFDP?)

3rd FOR THE CROWN, IN CONTROL (Hardcore), MODERN LIFE IS WAR (IA), DRAGNET (MA). Another 5pm show.

8th THE LOCUST, RAH BRAHS, ERASE ERRATA, HELLA.

9th STRIKE ANYWHERE, FROM ASHES RISE, THEY LIVE (NY), ROBOT HAS WEREWOLF HEAD (NY), THE DISASTER (NY) (No local bands?)

15th LUDICRA, BRAINOIL, WORMWOOD (WA) ← awesome! FALL OF THE BASTARDS (OR), IN THE WAKE OF THE PLAGUE

16th IRON LUNG, THE GATECRASHERS (NJ), OUT OF VOGUE (LA) (more TBA)

17th THE DAMAGE DONE, DESPERATE MEASURES (DC), FAR FROM BREAKING (TX). 5pm!

23rd THOUGHT RIOT, SCATTERED FALL, LOVESONGS, KADENA (NY), ESKARO (Vallejo!)

30th PITCH BLACK, SCURVY DOGS (rec. rel.), DEADFALL

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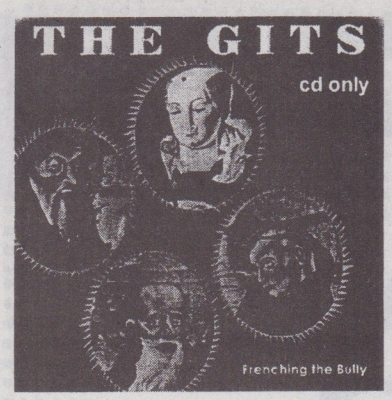

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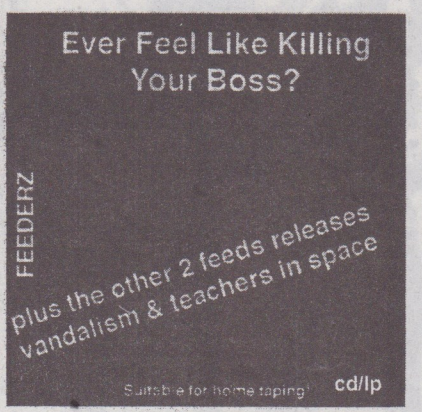

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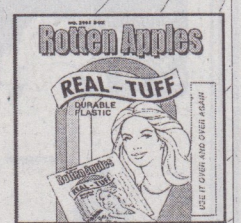

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LETTERS

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Dear *MRR*—
I am writing in response to that farce of an article, "What Happened to Music Zines?!" you ran in the May issue, #240, of your magazine. This is directed towards the people who spoke ill of the online zine I work on, *blankgeneration.com*, and internet-based zines in general. Now, I am aware that there are setbacks in doing an online zine, such as, you can't carry it around with you, not all people have access to computers, you can't read it while you're on the john, etc., etc. However, this kid Stefan's accusations that "for it to be a zine it needs to be some sort of material that you can hold," and that only printed zines are, "something that you put a lot of work into and that there's a lot of passion behind," are completely imprudent and fictitious. I've read some of these kids' zines, and coming from someone who's been doing what I do for over four years now, I can honestly say I put a hundred times more passion into the zine I work on than they do theirs. I mean, exactly how many issues has *Trash Faction* put out? Three? Opinions are opinions, but these people are judging something solely on the look and not on the content, which is wrong, and, I might add, no different than that of racism. That last statement might be a bit of a stretch, but the consequence is still there. What I and other online zines do, is no different than what printed zines do. As my friend Shawn Abnoxious pointed out to me, blankgeneration.com isn't just online. Parts of it are in Shawn's printed zine, *Neus Subjex*, Ms. Holly's printed zine, *Cranked Up Really High*, and even *Maximum Rock N Roll* via Mark Murrmann's retired column "If You Die and Go to Hell, Who Cares?" Print or HTML, the material is still the same, so why should it not be considered a zine? There are a lot of oxymorons in the article, such as websites are, "the most commercial," and that, "those two things go hand and hand." Fucking hello!!? Wasn't that a Diesel ad I just saw in my new copy of *Vogue*!? So no, periodicals can be just as commercially oriented as websites. I'm not trying to fuel the war between the printed and digital word; I had no idea there was one. I just feel the need to expose these people's opinions as total bullshit. Stewart talks about the importance of music zines today, and how few there are, yet discredits music zines that are online. Further, he seems to talk about the heart of punk rock, but I feel that he doesn't truly know what it is. It's not too "punk rock" to disparage something that aims to promote the exposure of independent punk music.
Joe Domino
Editor of *blankgeneration.com*

Joe Domino,

I was forwarded a letter to MRR *that you wrote in response to the "Zine Roundtable" article from a few issues back that I took part in. I'm not really sure why you're so riled up by it as I thought it was actually rather inoffensive. You state up front that you're writing in response to "the people who spoke ill of the online zine I work at...and internet-based zines in general." Since the only mention of your zine was one sentence spoken by Jill, who said, in the context of a discussion about aesthetics and the materiality of zines, "Even if Joe Domino saves his files I'm not gonna be looking at* Blank Generation *in ten years," I'd hardly say anyone spoke ill of your zine (and if that's all it takes to get you upset I'd hate to see how you react to any real criticism). What Jill was saying was not a comment on content, but about the charm and personality of the cut and paste layouts presented in paper zines, and noting the inability to have that charm on the web. I also think you're reading out of context what Stefan had to say. He said, "I just think a zine is something that you put a lot of work into and there's a lot of passion behind it, to have it behind some screen doesn't seem like you put anything into it." That's why he doesn't do a webzine, not why you shouldn't.*

*There are a ton of great music web pages—*Break My Face, Kill From the Heart, Perfect Sound Forever, *and* Blastitude *come to mind as being the cream of the crop—and I don't think anything that was said in the article was meant to take away from that. Rather, one thing that came up in our conversation was why we prefer the paper format: it exists in the real world, and will not disappear with the click of a button, and, therefore, acts as a record of the times; the aesthetics involved in cut and paste just don't exist in internet layout; and so on. To prefer one medium to the other is hardly analogous to racism. And, fuck, dude, there ain't a way to throw your argument out the window and discredit quicker yourself than making idiotic comparisons to racism.*

It's totally rad to know that you put a hundred times more passion into the zine you work on than I do mine. I mean, that's impressive! Personally, I put 76 units of passion into Destroy What Bores You *(what is the proper term for a unit of passion, again? I skipped that class.) That puts you at 760 units, maybe more! That's really awesome. I'm still lost as to what* Trash Faction *only doing four issues has to do with the quality of the zine—quantity does not equate to quality, though unfortunately there are a lot of people (you included, it seems) who would argue with that.*

I think the thing that really got me about your response was this: who cares what we have to say? Why bother getting so offended if you think we're so wrong? Perhaps the lesson must be taught (not just to you, but to many) not to feel so attacked by

everything that appears in print, not to treat the written word as gospel that need be shot down when it contradicts your feelings. There's room in the world for opposing points of view! And isn't it true that you took our conversation so seriously only because it appeared in print? If we'd just posted it to the web you'd have probably chuckled and not given it another thought.
Rocknroll,
Dave
PS. His name is Stuart, not Stewart—your upstate NY convenience store pride is showing. Also, I think you should look up the word "oxymoron."

Dear Lefty—
In response to your response—I'm going to attempt to make this short, because it doesn't really interest me much at this point, but I feel the need to answer your letter. Not on the political argument level—I wrote in, said what I thought, you said what you thought, OK, cool.

But then you spend half the letter berating me for all these things you assume I am and telling me what you think of that. Not even, "I bet you come from this place," or "it sounds like this"…just, "I know." Well, *eat me*; you don't know shit! OK, Lefty, I could "toss most of what I learned in American schools," but while I did go to school here in the US (something you have no reason to assume), I dropped out in 10th grade. A long, long time ago. I think I've probably forgotten whatever elementary algebra I managed to pick up back then between cutting classes to get stoned in the years since.

Is it so obvious that I come from a "bourgeois" background? Pretty funny; actually I was raised on welfare, government cheese, and without hot water or electricity as often as not due to money troubles. And thus something that your theory may not have room to validate but which I know—as someone who lives in the punk scene, a scene largely made up of people from "decent" (I personally don't see anything indecent about being hard up, but that's the phrase), if not flat-out rich, backgrounds—I know that I do have a lot in common politically with other people who are in, or have been in, poverty situations, and who understand my panicky relationship to money and security, such as housing. No, it isn't the most important thing, and I don't interview potential affinity group members to assure myself we come from the same background, but there are some things other people don't understand, as you have well illustrated.

But hey, thanks for the laundry list of your good deeds to the less fortunate. I rest easier knowing you're out there to make things all better for us poor, unlearned unfortunates. 'Cause your assumptions about my class *were* based on the fact that I know how to spell and formulate a sentence, right?
Amanda

PS—I'm truly happy for your new neighbors, who can now afford to live in the city again. But do you truly believe that the number of homeless people in this city is unrelated to the incredibly high rents? Buy a *Street Sheet*, read the fucking articles; homeless people aren't some strange anomaly who love living outside in the city—for the most part, they're poor people who fell behind, often due to medical bills or some other such unforeseeable financial crisis; a huge number of people in shelters and on the streets work 40 hours or more a week and are still unable to afford housing in this city. You really call that a renter's market?

Dear *MRR*—
In regards to your review of *Break the Chains,* I'd just like to inform you that the article on the cover (the one with the retarded statement that the "role of existence rivals that of the dinosaurs") was not written by the editor, it was written by me, a guy in prison who has absolutely no control over the moron who has singlehandedly butchered every article I've ever written which he's published. He could really use a good course in DIY editing. There were several errors in the text of that piece as it was printed in *BTC*. "Role of existence" should have read "rate of extinction"—"fucking chest wound" should have read "sucking chest would," etc. I expect typos, but *BTC* is, or should be, famous for making mistakes which change whole meanings of articles and make those of us on the inside look like fucking morons.
In total resistance,
Critter

MRR—
Hello. This is Bronson from Loud Music Venue. We are a not-for-profit all-ages venue in Montgomery, Alabama just getting off the ground with the help of the local music scene. We are all in bands and are trying to promote political change and activism as well as racial peace and tolerance. We are organizing free school to get kids active in the Southeast. I know this isn't exactly close to home, but do you realize that Alabama has voted Republican every year since it was established as a state after the American Civil War? Beyond the political front... We try and help sXe bands make their way to LA, TX, FL, CA, NM, etc. It is a lot of work and a lot of flyers. If you have any pointers, bands, etc. that you recommend, as well as any literature that might help us out, please write back. Also, any *BYOFL* merch information you might deem as useful...
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Dear *MRR*—
Re: the Barse controversy…Both complaints from Leeds, PC capital of the world—what a surprise! Now actually, I think Andy Cactus does a lot of good for the scene, flogging zines, etc. But I think there is something in the water down there that destroys the inhabitants' sense of humor and creates the need to say the right things and slag off the right bands to get into the PC brownie point books (why Andy I don't know, he's already got a lass so no need to put on the sensitive image!) When Barse—the band who are "so boring and dated"—played Leeds, who should be up dancing to "I Hate America" but a Mr. Andy Cactus!

Same bloke also told Chip from *Headwound* zine that he secretly liked the Barse songs on my comp tape!

As for being "sulky," well, the band traveled over 100 miles to play through a PA like an Alba hi-fi (the engineer stood at the bar not even trying to do anything about it) with one organizer throwing a pint over the singer before they had even started and the other organizer insulting them over the mike at the end. Gash did make a joke ["Shame Peter Sutcliffe couldn't make it tonight!"] and a few insults were traded, but the week after at HITS, we sat on the beach drinking with the organizers like the best of mates. Some sulk! Gash even told Rachel to keep the Barse tapes he left at the venues to put in a raffle for Rape Crisis or Prisoner Support.

I agree with many of Andy's political views, but being ultra-PC just scares off the very people you need on your side, and is more likely to drive them into the hands of far right fruitcakes than actually put sense into them. To call Barse "boring" just because they don't sound like a Black and Decker drill slaughtering the inhabitants of Battersea Dog's Home I just find absurd. I saw them play recently with the Pits and it was one of the best performances I've seen in the history of punk rock. Of course if Andy was there he would've only wanted to see the first ten minutes, which were plauged by equipment problems. After that it was pure punk mayhem, a wall of power, an apathetic audience torn to bits by the band's cutting wit, and to cap it all, a guitarist who played one song with his head out of the window shouting at lasses coming back from the Girl's Aloud concert down the road.

As for being "dated," well glam rock is probably dated but they had good tunes and good guitars. Thrash/HC, nu metal, emo, and rave/dance music are all—we are told—fashionable, but personally I think it sounds like a pile of shite. Maybe you think I'm just an old cunt sitting in a rocking chair like Val Doonican, but I appreciate the value of a singer who can sing, songs written with a bit of thought, musicians who can play. And that doesn't have to mean mid-paced, overproduced ,middle of the road crap. Next to my hi-fi at the moment are Deadline, Agitators, Heartaches, Buzzcocks, Threats, Sleazies, Pits, Mighty Mighyt Bosstones, Discipline, etc... Forget all the sub-genres or trends—there are only two kinds of punk rock to me—good and bad. Most of Andy's mates are into bands who (badly) copy Discharge—who's first record of course only came out three to four years after the Pistols. Is there some kind of line in the sand we can draw from where "dated" applies?

I still have some copies left of Barse's first CD, *Negative Reaction* ($6ppd cash)and if anyone wants to trade contact trevhagl@hotmail.com. I also have my 20 year anniversary issue of my zine *Hagl* with Superyob, TV Smith, Oi Polloi, and Intensive Care, plus loads of articles, reviews, cartoons, etc.
Trev, Rosehill, 20 New Front St., Tanfield Lea, Stanley, Co. Durham, DH9 9LY, UK

Dear *MRR*—
With reference to the Barse interview in your May issue—we're punx from Leeds, which apparently makes us PC fanatics (or more precisely, we have brains and a bit of integrity) and just thought we'd offer a few comments on Barse and their attempts at being shocking.

There are things you just don't casually accuse people of, and child molesting is about top of that list. Now this may seem like an over reaction to an off-the-cuff remark, but let's put it into context—imagine a band interviewed in a big UK zine (say *Reason To Believe*) accusing some well-known US zinester (say Mykel Board) of raping children—now you'd be pretty bloody irate about that wouldn't you? See where we're coming from here?

Andy Cactus seems to have aroused the wrath of Barse because he said they were "OK." He didn't even slag them off, only said they were average and not very shocking (which is a fairly accurate appraisal). Maybe for a band that tries so hard to be shocking, that was some kind of profound insult. Selling your band on cheap shock value is pretty feeble these days, especially when you can't get more provocative than a few references to serial killers and using the word "slag" a few times. Thing is, they're musically decent, and if they weren't caught up so much in this whole anti-PC crap, they might be all right. But we have a little clique of zine writers in the UK who are fixated with that and Barse seem to have been sucked into the argument. Leeds, for the benefit of US readers, is a large northern UK town with a very active and vibrant, and politically sorted punk scene, something which has attracted a certain amount of scorn (envy?) from a number of zine writers over here. But your readers have better things to do than listen to the bickerings of the UK punk scene.

The PC vs. non-PC argument has been done to death, and I'm sure anyone out there with a few brain cells realizes what a dead-end that sort of argument is. False dichotomies, as someone pretentious once said.

Provoking stupid arguments by slinging insults around is just pathetic. There's nothing big or clever about it and it just makes the band in question look like they're a bit desperate for attention. Which in a way is what we're giving them by writing this, but since they attacked a very good friend of ours in such a global forum, we couldn't exactly stay silent. There's no excuse for wanton ignorance.
Cheers, Rachel & Chip
Headwound Fanzine

Hi Mike and Arwen—
This is just a short note from Dave of *Fracture Fanzine* over here in the UK to let your readers know that "legendary" rip off record label, Three Days Dead (from Caerphilly, South Wales, UK), has not ceased trading, but has recently changed its name to Day of the Dead Music (www.dayofthedeadmusic.com). The main kid involved, Marc Webster, has been sighted at various local youth center gigs selling "demonic thongs" and other such shit to kids who don't know of his history. Unsurprisingly, he's never at any local punk or hardcore shows where he might bump into someone he knows. I would just like to warn bands in particular to steer clear of this label

if they are approached by them. They have supposedly signed a band called the Flakes from Sweden and also have a site "dedicated" to them that has set up by a San Diego band called Model Citizen which can be found at www.threedaysdead.com—it's a bit of a hectic mess, but if you look at enough of it any sane person can probably get enough information from it to decide for themselves whether they wish to deal with Day Of The Dead and Marc Webster, or not.
Thanks for your time!
Dave.

Hello ladies and gents—I have never written to a mag or zine before and I just wanted to let you folks know you rock! For the last ten years I have been buying your zine every month and I can always rely on tons of reviews, new bands coming out, and zines I might never get a chance to read if it were not for your fine publication. So to all the people that citizen the zine and say they wouldn't wipe their ass with it, I say fuck you! at least *MRR* has kept true to what they set out to do and that's to keep our scene DIY! Not run by suits and ties but by punks. So as long as you keep doing your great job, I'll keep buying every month.
Thank you.
Mike

Dear *MRR* and Born/Dead folks—
This letter might cause a little shit storm, and I might very well anger a couple of friends or acquaintances, but that's OK.

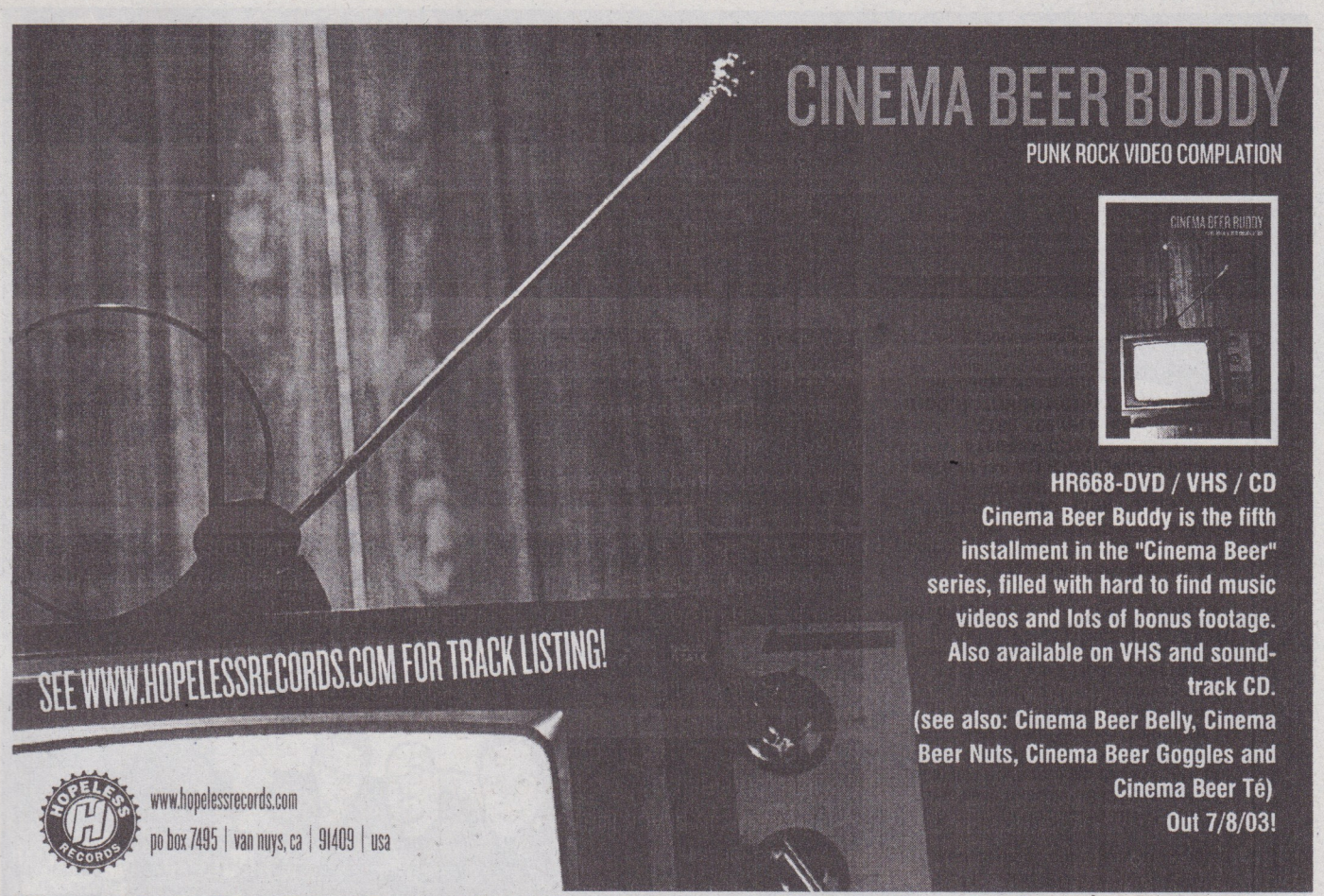
My reason for writing pertains to the Gilman show that features Born/Dead and is advertised as a "tour benefit" for Born/Dead. Now maybe this is some tongue in cheek, Bay Area scene joke, but if not, are you fucking serious?! I have always been under the impression that benefits were supposed to be for some worthwhile cause. Something like paying for someone's hospital bills, or a group of arrested activists' legal expenses or money helping to get a new space. Anything like that. But a benefit so a couple of people can go on tour and travel the country, play music, get wasted, and have a great time, seems absolutely absurd to me. Why not a benefit for another Burnt Ramen type space? Something that will "benefit" all, and not the few.

I don't know. Perhaps I'm not picking up on or missing out on something deeper to this. I myself have played in bands and attended and played benefits I've been more than happy to give my money to, but never once have heard of a benefit so someone could go travel ultimately. I sometimes think that playing in a band is just a commodity and now my feelings supporting that are even stronger. Next month will Gilman St. and Born/Dead have a benefit show for me so I can go travel Europe this fall?
Thank you for your time,
Jersey Mike / Seattle

Mike—Well hell, you're entitled to your opinion, but I guess I just don't see what's so awful about it all...I mean, I understand what you're saying, but if the bands involved are willing to give up their cut of the door (which is what we're talking about here, not money out of the pocket of the club), well, who cares? It's their money, more or less...and if you were going to go to the show, it would be your money involved and if you didn't like where it was going, you would be free to decide to spend it elsewhere, as I see it. I went to that show, it was a good show, and I felt I enjoyed five dollars worth of punk rock, and really, I'm more than happy to help folks in my community go run around and have fun and see the country and stuff. I think it's a good thing, and we should all be able to do it, and why not help each other out? Yeah, I'd like to see money being raised to start another all ages club around here—we need it—but it unfortunately takes more than just money and we're not at that stage right now. And when someone says, I want to start this, I need money, we'll do that too. It's not one or the other.
—Anandi

Hey *MRR*—
I just read the June (I think) issue of *MRR* and a column—unfortunately, I forget whose—mentioned Bush's isolationist attitude toward the International Criminal Court and the trial of Slobodan Milosevic. Because I think this is an important topic, I wanted to clear up some of the issues here.

First, Milosevic has not been tried by the International Criminal Court. Instead, his trial is located at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, an ad hoc tribunal whose mandate begins and ends with events that took place in the former Yugoslavia (surprise, surprise). Hearings for the ICTY are held regularly in Den Haag, the Netherlands, and will eventually end once the prosecutors working at the ICTY decide all guilty parties are taken care of. As far as I know, Bush is cool with the ICTY. I wouldn't be surprised if he's not even aware of it. The International Criminal Court is entirely separate. It's just starting up but will be a permanent entity established by a treaty and also housed in Den Haag. In principle, it is separate from the United Nations, but the treaty forming the ICC calls for close ties to the UN. The ICC handles "the most serious crimes" (think genocide) when a national court cannot or will not prosecute. Bush has decided this will be a political rather than legal court; basically, he's of the opinion that no American citizen (that means the soldiers who dropped bombs in Iraq) should be subject to the court. As such, the US is pressuring other countries to promise not to try Americans at the ICC. This is probably in violation of the ICC treaty, but definitely evidences just how corrupt the current administration is. The ICC would make an interventionist foreign policy a lot more difficult to administer, as it provides actual repercussions and potential jail time for the sort of activity Bush considers acceptable. Unilaterally bombing Iraq perhaps? And yes, there is a US law called the American Service Members' Protection Act allowing for "all necessary and appropriate means" to free US citizens at the ICC. In other words, invading our friend and ally, the Netherlands.
For more info, check out the informative websites for the two courts:
ICTY: www.un.org/icty/index.html
ICC: www.icc-cpi.int
Thanks—Greg Gartland



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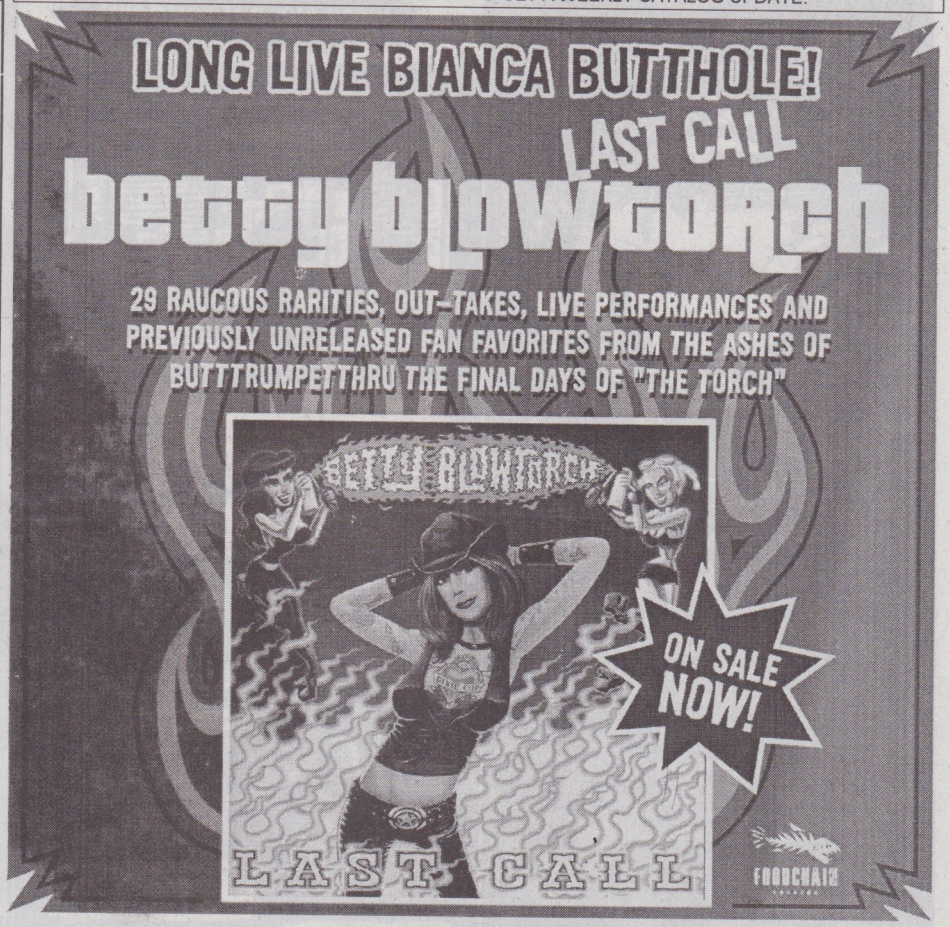

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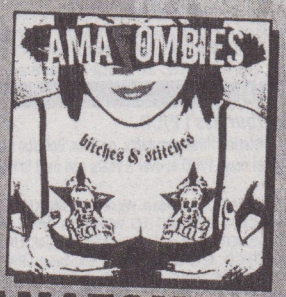

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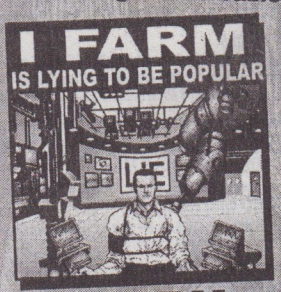

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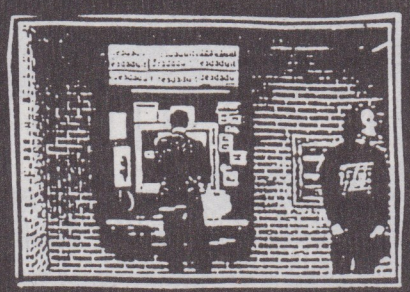

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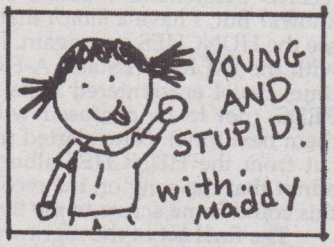

Greetings and salutations from Freedom! Yes, I am writing this column in the land of freedom fries, freedom toast, and freedom roast coffee! Punk! I'll be in France all summer, so they will be plenty of time to talk about ridiculous French stuff later (including a McDonalds on strike, selling t-shirts that say Hamburger Strike!), but right now it's Russia time! Yep, I am so unbelievably unpatriotic that I visited not one but TWO countries in opposition to Gulf War Part Deux (Hot Shots reference! I am lame!). Of course, the main reason for doing so was to insure that, when I run for president in, say, twenty years, people will loudly condemn me in the streets and on cable TV for "daring to befriend an enemy country during war time." I would also love to be accused of "protesting against my country ON FOREIGN SOIL!!!!!!!!" In fact, now that I think of it, I should probably cross over into Canada on a monthly basis, wave an anti-Bush sign on a sidewalk for a few minutes and then return home, in the hopes that SOMEONE would document my deceitful and treasonous behavior.

As Rev. Norb used to write, anyway, anyway, ANYWAY, I can think of no better country in which to protest against the USA than Russia. Preferably on Red Square. So, it was with great joy and anticipation that I traveled to St. Petersburg last week, after a week in Moscow (A week that will henceforth be referred to as "Gypsy Attack-Paul-McCartney-Concert-Socialist-Chocolate-Factory-Tour 2003," but to find out about THAT you're gonna havta read the next issue of *Tight Pants*!).

We arrived in Petersburg on the exact day of the Official 300th Birthday of the city. Dude! As you may or may not know, Russia has been making a huge deal out of this—mainly by repainting practically every building and having about 50 cops and/or army guys on each side of each block of each street. This immediately ruined our plans to protest (ON FOREIGN SOIL!!!!!) because we were travelling on semi-illegal non-validated visas. D'oh! The city was jammed full of tourists for the festivities, and, as if that wasn't bad enough, all the leaders of the G-8 countries were coming for two days as a break from their meeting in Evian. President Bush in Russia! President Bush looking deep into the eyes of Putin and realizing that his soul was good and pure! And you think I'M ridiculous!

Our train arrived in Petersburg a few hours before a massive laser show celebrating the glory of Peter the Great, complete with a sound system blaring songs about the city's greatness. Me, my sister Emily, and my boyfriend Aaron met up with a girl Emily knew and, for reasons inexplicable and nonexistent, we started walking TOWARDS the laser show instead of taking the more reasonable approach of GETTING AS FAR AWAY AS POSSIBLE (GAFAAP). In about ten minutes we were in the middle of a crowd of literally millions of Russians, pushing and shoving and pulling. People purposefully kicking shards of beer bottles at people's feet! At one point, the crowd was so smushed together that MY FEET WERE NO LONGER TOUCHING THE GROUND! It was a stampede! Only the strongest would survive and get to the riverbank to see the lasers! It was a battle to the death, roughly equivalent to the time I was almost killed at a GREEN DAY concert when I made the mistake of being in the front of a huge crowd, who proceeded to attempt to impale me on the barrier between me and the stage. Unlike the GREEN DAY concert, this time I did not have to resort to the most humiliating form of self-preservation: body-surfing. But still.

When and only when we had reached the point of near-death, the girl we were with decided that, hey, you know, maybe losing one's life in the pursuit of a sub-par Russian laser show was, well, not worth it. So we turned around and made our way to our sleeping quarters on the outskirts of the city. Unfortunately, the entrance to the metro most closely resembled the evacuation of the US Embassy in Saigon. You know, relaxed; peaceful, everyone waits their turn in line because, you know, I'm sure EVERYONE will be able to fit on that one helicopter with, uh, Robin Williams, right? Since everything in the city was booked in advance for the celebration, we were staying with an Armenian family who didn't speak any English in the middle of a Mad Max styled high rise apartment wasteland about 40 minutes from the city. Punk!

Our time with the family included the following: developing previously unknown hand gestures to indicate "President Bush wants to rule the world," drinking Georgian wine while toasting to "mir" (peace, or, if you like, the international space station), and, most importantly, learning how to say "Nyet Banya."

Allow me to explain. A banya is a traditional Russian sauna, where you sit, hang out, and also get beaten with sticks. You know, a relaxing way to spend the afternoon. Being someone who hates saunas, sweathouses, sweat lodges, running the mile in gym class and all other sweat-based extra-curricular activities, AND being someone who has already been to a Turkish bath in Budapest (an experience that can only be described as completely and totally not involving beatings), I was not that interested in visiting a Russian banya. But, one night when we were sitting around the kitchen table with the family, they asked us if we wanted to go. Just for an hour before we got on our train back to Moscow. We could all go together ad they would drive us there. In times like this, how can any self-respecting columnist decline what is most clearly an experience that would solve the worst problem plaguing mankind today: What will I write about in my *MRR* column? So, we said yes.

But then, slowly but surely and other cliches, the length of the time we would spend at the banya began to grow. Maybe two hours? Hmmm. At least three. Hmmmm. Well, since it's an hour and a half drive EACH WAY, plus we're going to need at least five hours in the banya.... Wait! No! We were in over our heads! We were going to spend FIVE HOURS at temperatures of 110 degrees! We were going to die in a small, heated hut on the outskirts of Petersburg, and we would be returned to United States in Air Force Two, shriveled and covered in birch marks, draped with an American flag. (Although, come to think of it, my international student id card DOES cover repatriation of remains up to $50,000.) Our bodies would be buried in Arlington National Cemetery with at least a temporary eternal flame, with cries of "SEE! SEE! These Americans were foolish enough to go to an enemy country! A member of the coalition of the UNWILLING! See what happened! Let this be a warning to you, brave, loyal Americans everywhere! This was the work of the terrorist Russian state! Yes, terrorist! And Al Quada! And Saddam Hussein! And Hitler!" In the end, even Michael Moore would shake his head and call our visit "misguided." No! No! We could NOT let this happen! We could not be tools of American propaganda! We will not let our bodies be sacrificed in the interests of Cold War the Sequel! No! Nyet!

So, in the interests of the international left-wing struggle, we declined the banya. Yes, we took one small but simple step towards a global revolution! We would NOT be the Elian Gonzalez of the USA! There would not be an empty desk kept in each classroom to mark our forced absence at the hands of the enemy! Yes, we rejected the banya, and in so doing, protested against our government! Right? Right! ON FOREIGN SOIL!!!!!!

P.S. Just a quick reminder. I am out of the country until late August. So, if I haven't gotten back to you, sent zines, etc., that's

why. If you need to contact me, email. cerealcore@hotmail.com, and if you want to order my zine and don't want to wait until I get back, check out www.microcosmpublishing.com <http://www.microcosmpublishing.com> .

My impressions of Chicago Blackout 2003

This was a punk rock fest thing. Fourteen bands. It took place at the Subterranean Club. May 8 through the 10th. I only saw two out of the three nights. For the record, the bands that played on the first night were FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS, A FEAST OF SNAKES, BLACK LIPS, and the LOST SOUNDS. I received conflicting reports from my friends about what was good and bad. For instance, Alberto of Wowsville told me that LOST SOUNDS were akin to bad prog rock. Meanwhile, another friend, Tom of Dot-Dash, told me they were great art punk. Aha! One man's art punk is another man's prog rock. All I really wanted to know was if they were costumed in those ultra-cool, black-leatherette jumpsuits with the rivets down the sides (as seen on their *Rat's Brains for Microchips* LP cover.) "Nah, just jeans and t-shirts," muttered Tom Dash. What? Jeans and t-shirts? How disappointing! How uncharacteristic of art-punk-prog-rockers.

Anyway, the second night, I was there and ready to rock. The first band of the evening was Chicago's own HOT MACHINES. I liked them! The guy and the girl traded lead vocals and that added some variety to their sound. They had no bass, two guitars, and a drummer (if I remember correctly). I recall thinking that they have potential. There was a lot of buzz going on about how the girl in this band is only 18 years old. Her parents were at the gig. They seemed like nice folks. I saw them smile. I found her smiling parents interesting, considering that the Horizontal Action's Chicago Blackout Festival 2003 banner featured a pornographic image of an "in heat," open-mouthed, nude woman on her hands and knees. It hung over the stage, directly above their daughter's head. She must have easygoing folks. Good for them. If my parents had been there, heart attacks would have surely followed. The question of whether the banner was sexist may be asked. I guess one man's "sexist" may be another man's "art punk."

Following the HOT MACHINES was the HARD FEELINGS from Austin Texas. I liked them, but I remembered thinking at the time that they could use some tightening up in their sound. The songs weren't bad and the band had personality, so I enjoyed their set. Afterwards were the LITTLE KILLERS from New York, who I have already raved about in three of my columns so far. At the risk of sounding redundant, let me just say that this is one of the greatest bands ever. On this night they were true to their name. They *killed!* They grabbed hold of the audience with their unrelenting rhythm! They got everyone going with their basic late-70s style punk guitar songs (with a slight 1950s R&B edge). The whole set pushed hard and mean and kept building and building, until finally they peaked brilliantly with their crowd-pleasin' number "Messin' Around." It was the long version of the song. There's a part in which a single repeated chord blares out without any deviation. That chord under the magic power of its own unrelenting momentum takes the audience away to a place where frenzy rules. The longer it goes on, the more the excitement builds! From your eyes, tears of joy fall from the pure beauty of experiencing true punk rock! At the song's conclusion, Andy the singer/guitarist departed the stage, and I'm told he konked out somewhere from exhaustion. His sleep was a well-deserved rest after putting out such top-level energy.

I thought the HUNCHES from Portland, Oregon were the biggest nothing ever. The vocalist barely sang into the mike at all. Whenever you did hear him, it seemed to be inaudible and/or incoherent mumbling. It wasn't vocally interesting. No song seemed memorable or distinguishable from another to me. It was a tuneless racket. I guess this is supposed to be compensated for by the fact that the singer wore a jacket covered with tampons. He deliberately and frequently fell onto the floor of the stage. I was not impressed. I've seen those antics before. It seemed to go nowhere and it dragged on for a long time. When I expressed my feelings about this to Tom Dash, I was assured that I am, to quote him, "just wrong!" Apparently this band is great, but I didn't see it. Tom loved it, as did others in the crowd. It appeared to me that there was about a 50/50 split between those who liked and those who disliked the HUNCHES. I assumed that those who liked it were similar to Tom. He was already familiar with their records, and was able to discern some sort of recognizable "songs" there. Maybe if I'd heard the records beforehand I also would have felt differently. Who knows? But, I have a *hunch* that I will not go out of my way to see the HUNCHES ever again. It was at a later gig in New York with the FM KNIVES and A-FRAMES, (more about them next time) that I encountered Nate Red, the drummer for the TIE REDS, (not to be confused with The TYRADES, more about them next time). Nate alerted me when DJ Tom Dash played a cut from the HUNCHES album. I paid attention and I must admit that the song on the record sounded good to me. If only this could come across to me live.

The final act of the night was the PENETRATORS, who are legends of the Syracuse 1970s punk scene. There were at least two of the original members backed up by the HARD FEELINGS. I felt that their set was a teensy bit uneven but mostly very, very, good. Quite a number of the songs had an authentic 70s American punk "KBD" quality. I was especially impressed when they allowed Nate of the TIE REDS to hop up on stage to sing the PENETRATORS song "Drive Me Crazy," which the TIE REDS had remade on their *Oh No, It's the Tie Reds* CD. But, then again, Nate is a swell guy and is *genuinely friendly*, so why the heck not? I thought the PENETRATORS had really good songs: Unlike the HUNCHES, I did not feel the need to know the PENETRATORS' music beforehand in order to like them. Nate told me that an LP of PENETRATORS stuff from the 70s entitled *Kings of the Basement* has been reissued on Rave Up records. I think I'm gonna look for it.

Homophobia disguised as "humor?"

One aspect of Chicago Blackout 2003 that I did not enjoy was the constant, offensive, homophobia that was unrelenting from the so-called MC, Mr. Brian Costello. I was told that he is some sort of local personality. I know nothing else about this man aside from the interview that he conducted with the TYRADES in *MRR* issue #241, and his appearance here as the MC for Chicago Blackout. In my humble opinion, an MC should just announce who's playing next, say something about the band, and then get off the stage as quickly as possible. This guy seemed far too desperate for attention. I did not see the need for him to remain on stage for lengthy periods of time, saying nothing in particular. Nor did I feel it was necessary for him to attempt to degrade the audience by calling them "faggots," "queers," and other anti-gay epithets, simply because there was no enthusiastic applause for the numerous poetry readings of Mr. Costello's self-described "hippie cousin from Florida." (There was no need for us to endure the meaningless "hippie" poetry in the first place. We were more than happy to continue to listen to the DJ spin records until the next band was ready to play.) I also quickly tired of hearing the humor-deficient Mr. Costello discuss the photograph of his scrotum that he repeatedly reminded us was on the back cover of the latest issue of *Horizontal Action* zine. His constant complaints about how he was "tricked" into posing for the photograph were tedious. I'm sorry to say that unlike the sidekick of Bud Abbott, *this* "Costello" was not the least bit amusing. Heck, *Elvis* Costello is funnier than this guy! I certainly did not appreciate Brian Costello's so-called "gay jokes" such as the one that consisted in its entirety of the statement that George W. Bush and Tony Blair performed in a gay porno movie together and pissed in each other's mouths. As you can well imagine, as a gay person, I fail to see the "humor" in equating gay people with the scum of the earth.

I do not think you would have liked it much either—it seemed that no one in the audience did! In a way that made me feel good, because I've been in audiences where anti-gay "humor" has been warmly received. Not so here! At first Mr. Costello was patiently endured, but eventually patience was worn thin and many persons shouted "get off the stage!" and "fuck you!" They pelted the unfortunate Mr. Costello with objects and poured their drinks on him. This behavior pleased

me because he was asking for it. Although Costello continued to berate the audience, calling them "gay" as if that were the lowest thing a person could ever possibly be, it's interesting to note that it was he who timidly moved into the corner of the stage in an attempt to avoid the onslaught of hurled objects and liquids. At one point during Mr. Costello's act, Nate, a straight boy who is not affiliated with homophobia, walked over to me and my boyfriend and bluntly said, "This guy sucks!"

"Well, how do you think it makes *us* feel?" was my only reply.

Sometimes to be gay in the punk scene you have to grow a thick skin. Yet, hearing the word "faggot" yelled from a stage need not always be an oppressive experience. To me there's a difference between Costello's "act" and a band like the late-great FEAR, who used to see an audience filled with violent muscle-bound boneheads, and would call them "a bunch of queers," and referred to themselves as happy to be "gay." In that case, FEAR were using words like "queer" and "gay" to *confront* the brainless homosexual panic and masculine insecurities of their audience, to challenge their blind and ignorant homophobia. There was no such lofty goal, or sense, or ironic intelligence in Mr. Costello's presentation. I honestly feel that his only rationale for his rampant usage of words like "faggot" was that he thought he was being amusing in a smart-ass "anti-PC" kind of way. That was what I observed. There was nothing thoughtful beneath the surface of his mindlessness. It was totally presented with the assumption that surely no gay person could possibly be in the room at a punk show. Maybe that's Mr. Costello's hope. Well, you know what? Gay people like me will no longer allow people like that to make us feel alienated and excluded from the punk scene or the music that we love. When our ears are blasted with homophobia blaring loudly into a microphone, we're not gonna be scared little kids anymore and we don't have to take it anymore. And we're not taking it anymore.

The following night, more great bands played. I was going to write more about it in this issue, but I got so hung up in critiquing Brian Costello that I'm now precariously close to *MRR*'s 2000 word limit for columns. Sorry. But, I'd still like to tell ya how the TYRADES, FM KNIVES, A-FRAMES, CLONE DEFECTS, and the SPITS were, so I'll probably save that for the next issue if nothing else of burning importance comes up.

In the meantime, I want to say that I'm still waiting for a day when people will no longer try to build themselves up by cutting down others with insulting words about homosexual orientation. So far, it's been a long wait.

It's been hotter than fuck in the Bay Area this past weekend. That's bad news for a fat guy. Just trust me on this one. Where did I go to chill out on the hottest day of the year (thus far)? That's right: a record swap in Sacramento. Sacramento! If it's 90 degrees in SF, it's about 9000 degrees in Sac. So I stroll up to the swap, wearing my black polyester "action-slacks" and a black pocket T-shirt (my usual uniform regardless of temperature) and the locals began gawking immediately. The expressions on their faces seemed to scream "FREAK!!!" Not that I ever need much of a reminder, but still...I got the point. The funny thing is that I had an actual choice of "cooling off" activities for that day. Obviously, there was the whole record swap. However, I must inform you that I turned down an invitation to go to the waterslides that same day. Now, seeing me at the waterslides would've been packed with enough comedy to write 20 column introductions, but I'm left with the normal bullshit intro: records and the search for them. Next month, I'll try bullfighting on heroin...that would make for a great intro. Anyway, here's this month's record rundown, all completely warped from the heat.

Speaking of the senseless slaughter of animals whilst engaging in the euphoric whirlwind that is junkiedom, Trickknee Productions has unleashed two absolute killers this month: the debut albums by the TEARS and the CATHOLIC BOYS! I demand to know: is there a band from Wisconsin that *doesn't* rock right now? The Tears have astronomically improved on their Bancroft single, coming across as the dream-world equivalent of KIM SHATTUCK and JOHN SCHOOLEY starting a band together! Tears guitarist/vocalist NickG also shines in the Catholic Boys, which seems to be his vehicle for destroying every other so-called "punk" band on the planet. What sets the Catholic Boys apart from other bands of this ilk (manic Midwestern Rip Off disciples) is that they have managed to do the spastic punk thing without ditching out on the anger and power needed to fully assault the listener. They are just ferocious! The Catholic Boys are fully capable of mind-fucking you without the use of bullshit wave-tinged trickery...just pure fucking punk here, Jack. These records (CD-only for now, vinyl soon) are definitely my top picks for this month and are guaranteed spots in my year end Top 10 (yes, I'm a huge dork). Get both of these ASAP!

For those of you living under a rock, Japan's FIRESTARTER features Fink, Fifi and Sammy...3/4 of TEENGENERATE! Judging by the name of this column, care to guess how I might feel about this band? Anyway, I'm sure some of you have been searching high and low for their Japan-only releases for a couple of years now. Either you've been lucky, or you're still out in the cold. I feel your pain, but be warned: what I'm about to say will have you pulling even more of your own hair out. Mangrove Records has just released Firestarter's second album, *Livin' On The Heat*! If I've just doubled your misery and OCD symptoms, I apologize. To the rest of you: holy fucking shit! Fink 'n' Fifi back at it in 2003!

Here's some more *really* big news. For the first time this century (yes, we're talking a looooooooooong time), the mighty Crypt Records has inked a deal with a new, currently active band! It's about fucking time! Anyway, tales of New York's LITTLE KILLERS have been spreading like wildfire throughout the punk/garage sewing circle. All reports of *Horizontal Action*'s recent Blackout Fest listed this band as major highlight, which says a lot considering the line-up the Blackout had. So, what did I find in the old mailbox right before the deadline? In typical Crypt fashion, a limited teaser 45 ("Better Be Right" b/w "Messin' Around") has just been released to get mouths a-watering for their debut long player (set for a September release). The verdict? The Little Killers deliver and are more than capable of holding their own against some of Crypt's past greats. If you are looking for actual rock'n'roll from NYC, I think this just might be it. This album is gonna fucking smoke, no doubt about it. Hopefully they keep it up and release records for other new bands! All interested parties should immediately Crypt's website and fuck around with that MP3 bullshit they've got going on now.

Did any of you bother tracking down that ANTEENAGERS MC single I mentioned a few columns ago? These Frenchies just trotted through the US on a mini-tour and totally blew me away! To further add to my glee, they were carting around a box of their brand new, self-released debut LP! There is so much going on with this LP that it's tough to find a place to start. First, I'll say that it's totally fantastic. Secondly, it's a collector's wet dream (very limited and each copy has unique sleeve art...no two are alike!). Lastly, they've thrown a monster kink into the mix. Side A is all Anteenagers MC and Side B is a bunch of French bands *covering* Anteenagers MC! That's right: their debut album is also a tribute album! Side B is credited to the tight-knit group of French garage punkers known as "The Happy Family." Checking in with the covers are greats like LES DRAGUEURS (featuring JON VON), OPERATION S (again, former NO-TALENTS), FRUSTRATION and a few other notables. Fuck Freedom Fries...find this record!

Anyone else out there pissed off that they couldn't make it out to the MOTARDS reunion? Well, no use crying over it now. Besides, if you were there you probably were too drunk to remember it the next day! Thankfully, Mortville Records was kind enough to release a limited edition CD to remind the drunks and please the non-attendees. *Stardom* features a whole bunch of rarities and unreleased material, so if that's your bag, run with it. Just so you know, I refuse to put this in the "Old Shit" section because...I'm young, damn it! As a side note, Mortville also just released a three-song 7"EP by THE MARKED MEN! If it's half as good as their Rip Off LP, I'll be a happy guy.

Another batch of Texas hellions, the HARD FEELINGS, have a new 45 on Tear It Up Records, "100 Miles An Hour" b/w

"Bo's Bounce." Talk about an odd couple: a Texas band and a label out of the Netherlands. Anyway, I'm happy to see this band building a healthy discography since the REVELATORS left us with so little. Also of note: Hard Feelings head-honcho John Schooley does the ever-so-popular one-man-band thang on a new LP, released on LIGHTNING BEAT-MAN's Voodoo Rhythm Records.

Fuck You! That's the name of Hate Record's singles/rarities comp LP by those Dutch techno-punks, the NAZIS FROM MARS. It's appropriately titled…I'll give it that. For those who haven't already been won over, NFM do the whole poppy '77 punk thing with lotsa fuzz and a beer-drenched drum machine. This is the obligatory "I forgot to mention it last month" record…so it might've already vanished.

Why is it that I always mention comps? I thought I hated these fucking things? Whatever. I've come to the conclusion that I love regional comps. Here's a burning question: is it even possible to love a regional comp if that region is Los Angeles in 2003? *Let's Get Rid Of LA* is about to answer that question. I must say that it's looking like they are going to pull it off. The comp will feature the only bands in LA worth getting excited about these days: the PINKZ, FLASH EXPRESS, NEON KING KONG (who are already dead), THE FUSE! and a few other notables. This should be available by the time this hits stands, but check www.letsgetridofla.com for updates.

After far too long of a wait, Portland's most famous juvenile delinquents, the DISKORDS, finally belted out another single! This time it's a split with the LOW ROLLERS on the great (and busy as of late) Johnny Cat Records. I'm stunned how kids this young can play '77 punk this well. I will never be as cool as this band…ever! It should be mentioned that this is quite possibly the world's finest band whose members have yet to grow pubic hair.

After last month's fantastic WHITE+OUTS single, I contacted Shit Sandwich Records and procured their previous release, a 45 by Baltimore's FUSES. Chances are you've come across this bands decent GANG OF FOUR inspired rumblings, but I'm willing to wager that you'll be floored by "Sex Crimes" b/w "Me, I Disconnect From You." Yeah…TUBEWAY ARMY…but the real story is the A-side. Absolutely killer punky pop, something that I didn't think this band was capable of, let alone interested in. Suffice to say, I dig this single immensely…take a gamble.

The SINGING DOGS, from Italy, have released a single on one of my favorite European labels, Ken Rock Records. I haven't been into many bands from Italy these days, but these folks are pretty good. They're snotty, loud, and capable of creating quite a bit of racket for being a two-piece. The Singing Dogs' *Right Now* 7"EP has all the trademarks of a garage punk single: a limited and hand-numbered pressing with a silent groove on the B-side. You know, it's shit like this that gets me teary-eyed.

Remember last month when I promised a report on that *Reagan Era HC* bootleg series? Well…I decided to take the more legitimate route this month (don't worry, I'll get to these boots, promise) and dish an excavated hardcore treasure that is of immediate importance to every reader. If you don't know, no you do: Dischord has officially released *First Demo Tape* by…yes, MINOR THREAT! I've always been a sucker for unreleased studio material and alternate takes, so maybe this appeals to me more than most. But c'mon…Minor Threat's first recording ever! Sure, it's been booted before. Sure, you've heard these tunes before. But there is a brand new, authorized Minor Threat 7"EP released in 2003. Guess what? Best hardcore record of 2003 too…really.

Moving abruptly from the inspiring to the inebriated, scumfuck GG ALLIN doesn't see his famed *Always Was, Is And Always Shall Be* LP reissued on vinyl. He doesn't see it because he's dead. It actually did get re-released on vinyl, though (on Brazil's appropriately named and probably fake label, Ass Face Records) in a special edition for the anniversary of his death, which I just realized was ten years ago. Which also means that time flies when you're alive and using toilets on a regular basis.

A couple of fairly essential LPs have surfaced showcasing a couple often over-looked UK greats. Last Year's Youth has unleashed another fine rarity, this time in the form of an LP. The band in question is the CARPETTES, which should immediately excite fans of UK mod/punk. *Small Wonders: The Complete Singles 1977-1980* is a great package and one-stop shopping if you ask me. Good luck finding one though, 500 colored vinyl copies only. Staying in the UK, the TELEVISION PERSONALITES' *…And Don't The Kids Just Love It* LP has just been bootlegged. I've always been a fan of this record, but I have never owned a vinyl copy…until now!

I'm gonna cut it a bit short(er) this month, which should please both readers and *MRR* coordinators alike. One thing I haven't mentioned before: I'll gladly accept demos, although the chances of them making it into the column are extraordinarily slim. In closing, I'd like to say how absolutely horrified I am about the various BLACK FLAG reunion spectacles that are reportedly taking place. Gee, what a brilliant idea…

<Mitch Cardwell> <letsgethurt@yahoo.com>

Rock & roll is a strange thing, in that it has always existed simultaneously in different worlds. It is common knowledge that its musical origins are from African American and European American folk music. Within both groups' folk music there is a clash between the spiritual and the secular. In African American folk music, gospel and the blues sit polarized. In Euro-American folk music, the contention is between gospel and country music. During the early 20th century, many musicians—Black and White—were forced to make the choice between singing about their faith or making up songs that reflected their daily lives. This tension between the spiritual and the secular intensified the emotion of the music.

The conflict within both Black and White folk music was paled by great racial divide in America's social and political spheres. Even the most miseducated youth know that the history of race in America is not pretty. While both folk musics developed, Blacks were denied many rights and forced to live in poverty. During the early 1900s, the lynching of African Americans was epidemic.

Ethnic tensions also existed within European America. While the violence visited upon Southern and Eastern European immigrants was not as persistent or extreme as it was for African Americans, it was there. During the 1920s, there were public lynching of Italian Americans and many recent immigrants were beaten and killed. There were also class conflicts within Euro America. Those who worked the land, in factories and mines, were the dogs of the White race.

These tensions gave musicians things to sing about. The songs that resulted gave people of different races and ethnicity a point of contact. A bridge was created and from it came rock & roll.

The history of rock & roll is well known and the enmity that aided rock & roll's sound and development is routinely acknowledged; however, one of rock & roll's tensions is usually ignored. Like it or not, the "Devil's noise" is both a folk music and a commercial music. It is here where the world of Tin Pan Alley and professional songwriting collide with the strumming and plucking and recitation of one person's experiences and concerns. It is also here where the primal nature of rock and roll sideswipes the cold, cool world of business.

Rock & roll might have come about by White folk listening to race music (blues and gospel) on Black radio and Black musicians hearing hillbilly music (country) on White radio. However, the medium that enabled people to hear rock & roll en masse was the phonographic record album, a product that was meant to be bought and sold.

Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1901, but it wasn't until the 1920s that the medium became a multi-million dollar industry. While phonographs were being developed, so to was the radio. By the end of the 1920s, two companies, RCA (Radio Corporation of America, formed in part by the US government as a way to keep foreigners from owning the airwaves) and CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System, an early challenge to the might of RCA, founded by a disgruntled ex-RCA employee) dominated radio.

At that time, music on the radio was played by live bands. The playing of records on the radio was rare. However, a series

of labor conflicts with live radio bands and a major push by Columbia to develop the phonograph (followed by RCA, who also had a record division) lead to a resurgence of recorded music. By the late 1930s, the popularity of records started to rise.

Before radio, the record companies' main product was classical music, opera, and spoken word. After radio's embrace of recorded music, the two genres that continued to grow in sales were "race" and "hillbilly" music. In 1943, Detroit jukebox operators (where the bulk of records were sold) reported that hillbilly music was their biggest seller. Race records were a close number two. After World War Two, record sales bumped higher and, by the mid-50s, just soared.

Of course, in order to sell records, you have to have something on them, and that sound in the grooves has to be made by someone. In the beginning of the record industry, the artists represented on wax were people who already had a name, either on stage or in the world of sheet music. These folks, being established stars, were paid well for their efforts. As the industry grew and the public started asserting their tastes, new artists were sought out. Record companies would send independent producers or recordists out into the field in order to capture music, later pressed on records and sold.

One of the most notable recording sessions was one which occurred in Bristol, Tennessee. Over a period of two weeks in July 1927, recordist Ralph Peer, working for the Victor Talking Machine Company (later owned by RCA), set up in the small Tennessee/Virginia border town and recorded 76 songs by the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers, El Watson, and others. The recordings have been praised throughout the years and are widely acknowledged as "the most important event in the history of country music" (Johnny Cash, who was married to the late June Carter Cash, a member of the Carter Family clan).

While the music is extraordinary, what is typical is the amount of money the Bristol musicians got paid. Lured to town in hopes of making $3,000-plus for one song, most musicians walked away with a promise to get $50 for each song that made it on to record, and 2 1/2 cents for each record sold. How many of the participants of the historic recording sessions got paid and how much that payment was is not known—what is known is that the Bristol musicians had it relatively good. Black musicians had it much worse.

What the average "race" artist could expect for recording a record is illustrated by the founder of Modern Records, whose roster included John Lee Hooker, Etta James, Lightnin' Hopkins, and other blues greats. Saul Bihari is quoted as saying "We used to bring 'em in, give 'em a bottle of booze and say, 'Sing me a song about your girl.' Or, 'Sing me a song about Christmas.' They'd pluck around a little on their guitars, then say 'OK' and make up a song as they went along."

While the musician was plucking and singing, tape would be rolling. If the artist was lucky, they would get a meal and a woman with their drink. The really lucky ones would get $5 to $10 if their song made it on record. Composers' rights were often signed away to a record company for the honor of being recorded. More often than not, records were pressed without the musician's knowledge, sometimes under another name. Rarely did a musician get royalties.

Because of the massive selling power of rock & roll, musicians saw more money than their predecessors. However, the same structure that ripped off musicians, especially Black artists, was in place. The artist worked for the record company and the record company had all the rules in their favor. Hell, the record companies made all the rules.

This is part one of a longer piece. Next MRR will have part II.

Send your comments and gifts to Scott Soriano, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 USA scotts@sl.net No junk mail or tour schedules please.

Finally, something that everyone agrees upon: the fact that no one trusts the news media. A CNN-Gallup-*USA Today* poll taken in the wake of the Jayson Blair scandal—Blair got shitcanned for making up news—indicates that just over a third of Americans trust news organizations to get the story right. Now that the dust from that mess is beginning to settle, it's time for America's editors, publishers, and producers to stop blaming rogue reporters like Blair and face the dreadful truth: they produce a crappy product.

Blair's editors may have coddled a drunken drug addict, but *The New York Times* consistently publishes the finest national and international reporting available in the United States. Even so, a hardly a day passes without at least a half-dozen entries appearing in a corrections section whose hilariousness more than makes up for the paper's no-comics policy. On May 28, the paper 'fessed up to five spelling mistakes (Friedman instead of Freedman, a "z" dropped from Pizzarelli, Helmut Newton rather than Lang). The none-too-hip Newspaper of Record also called the Beatles' song "All My Loving" "All My Love." My favorite goof, though, was this: "An article in Business Day on Friday about a legal dispute involving the price of a sculpture formerly owned by Humana Inc., the health insurer, referred incorrectly to Dorothy Cherry, the widow of Wendell Cherry, a co-founder of Humana who collected artwork. She is alive."

Welcome back, Dorothy.

Anyone who deals in words makes mistakes. My weekly column went out a few weeks ago with "includes" in place of "included," implying that ex-CIA director William Casey was still alive and toiling at the Bechtel Group. For the record, he's dead.

Bye, Bill.

Such innocuous blunders, if they occur infrequently, are easily forgiven. But they're ubiquitous. And many media mistakes cross the line into untruth.

I was shocked by the errors in a 2002 *Times* piece about the construction of a new US military base in Kyrgyzstan, a subject I happen to follow. Referring to the Central Asian state's nationality, the writer used "Kyrgyzstani"—there's no such word—in place of the correct "Kyrgyz." More damning, the story's central thesis—that Kyrgyzstan had assumed strategic importance to the US after 9/11 *because it bordered Afghanistan*—was wrong. There's a large, mountainous country (it's called Tajikistan) between Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. My letter to the editor pointing this out didn't make the letters page, but *The Times* did run a tiny two-sentence correction. The *entire article* was a lie, but even the anal-retentive types who read the corrections section would think it only contained a minor geographical error.

Pundits were surprised that few of Jayson Blair's victims contacted his editors to complain about his misstatements. Not me. As the frequent subject of printed and broadcast features and interviews, I regret to say that only a fraction of them even get basic facts right. I tell reporters that I work for Universal Press Syndicate; they often call it United Media. I've been called blond and brunet, thin and fat, Todd and Tedd, Rahl and Rail. Anyone who deals with the press has suffered similar indignities.

There are countless problems with the way "news" is collected and disseminated, starting with excessive reliance on official press releases (why are Homeland Security color code announcements reported as news?), the use of "stringers" (most readers don't know it, but some quotes are phoned in from "the field" by anonymous employees to deskbound reporters) and insufficient fact-checking. But the real reason that Americans don't trust what they read in the paper and watch on TV is contextual spin.

Here are some examples from the May 28th *Times*. Bear in mind that I'm using *The Times* to illustrate the problem precisely because it does a *better* job than most of its competitors. Odds are that your paper is far *worse*:

In a piece about the allied occupation of Afghanistan, Carlotta Gall included the following quote by Maj. Gen. John Vines: "Some 25 years ago, as Afghanistan was wracked by war, the world looked the other way. [Our] presence here today reflects a commitment not to repeat that mistake." Actually, the United States and the Soviet Union began fighting a proxy war in Afghanistan 25 years ago. We did not "look the other way"—quite the contrary. Afghans would surely have been better off had "the world looked the other way." Gall's piece lets Vines' historical distortion stand without correction or clarification.

The respected Committee to Protect Journalists accused US forces of firing on Baghdad's Palestine Hotel during the war in

Iraq, asserting that they deliberately killed two European reporters even though "no gunfire or RPG fire had come from the hotel or its immediate vicinity." *The Times* buried Christopher Marquis's incendiary report about this claim on page A13, thus freeing Page One space for a fluff piece on rich Manhattanites who hire advisers to help their 4-year-old children find the right private school. A story that should have become a national scandal dropped out of the news.

Another buried A13 article, by Eric Schmitt, began thus: "Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld suggested publicly for the first time yesterday that Iraq might have destroyed chemical and biological weapons before the war there." A typical American news junkie might consider this stunning revelation, coming after repeated Administration claims of the contrary, front-page news. RUMSFELD ADMITS: WE LIED in 72-point type sounds about right, coupled with a lead editorial calling for Bush's impeachment—but not to Schmitt's editors.

Each day's newspaper and evening news broadcast are miracles, the astonishing result of hundreds of dedicated (and, for the most part, honest) professionals rushing to meet deadlines. Unfortunately, too many media executives allow the pressure to produce to undermine the primary reason we buy their product: to learn the truth.

No wonder we don't believe them.

P.S. NEW BOOK: GAS WAR: THE TRUTH BEHIND THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN is out. It's my comprehensive, painstakingly researched look at the real reason Bush ordered the invasion of Afghanistan: to run a gas pipeline from the world's biggest oil reserves (in Kazakhstan) to the sea for transportation by tankers. GAS WAR relies on mainstream sources to piece together the biggest scandal of the century so far—how the world's richest nation bombed its poorest for the sake of corporate gain. GAS WAR is available through my website www.RALL.com or Amazon but not through most bookstores because none of my regular publishers dared touch this controversial topic. Alternatively, you can mail $15 (includes Priority Mail shipping within the U.S.) to: Ted Rall, PO Box 2092, Times Square Station, New York NY 10108.

P.P.S. Free Generalissimo El Busho propaganda posters are now available on my website, www.rall.com. Check 'em out!

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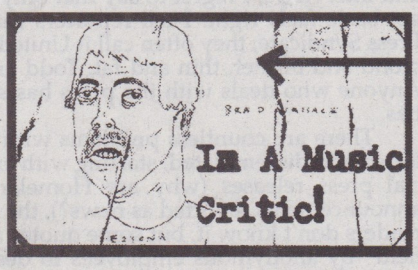

Hello *MRR*! Up the fucking punx! That said, this column is going to be about emo, emo-hardcore, screamo, chaotic hardcore, post-hardcore, emo-violence, and a bunch of other words whose definitions are in constant flux and don't really mean anything. Nonetheless, you'll probably see me throwing these words around from time to time, because for whatever reason, these are the words that are generally used to categorize the type of music I'm interested in talking about. Hopefully along the way I'll find a few clever adjectives to help you, the listener, discern which post-chaotic emo hardcore band is different than the next.

I wanted to do this column for a variety of reasons, but two stand out the most. One is that I really enjoyed Tom Hopkins's column covering similar subject matter, and since Tom's column stopped appearing it would seem that no one else has picked up the slack. Two is that I've always felt that *MRR* was one of few things that was able to bring all sub-genres of punk and hardcore together, or at least attempt to. As of late, though, I haven't seen any emphasis on the emo-hardcore, and I think it's largely because the labels and bands that are involved in the creation of records in this style rarely send in records for review or send in interviews, and infrequently advertise. Maybe said labels and artist don't feel that *MRR* does a good job covering the sub-genre they tend to specialize in? Well if that's the case, I hope to change that, and I hope that the labels and bands will help me do that by getting involved. Really all it's going to take is people sending in records for review, and passing along relevant information such as when tours are happening. So get off of Skylab for five minutes and send some records in if you're the type of kid that thinks Gravity Records kicked ass back in the day but you still think that Level-Plane is doing a pretty good job carrying the torch. I dare say even you sassy rockers that like your hardcore with a dance beat and keyboard can try your luck with me. *MRR* is more or less what we put into it. Hop to it.

The Book of Dead Names - *The Story Unfolds* LP

This record has been a refreshing piece of wax to be sure. Unfortunately it's been a long wait for this to come out, as half this record was recorded way back in 2000 and the other half wasn't finished till 2002. Good news is that despite intermixing recordings throughout the record, you don't really notice any major differences between the two. A good recording overall as well, powerful yet still sharp, exactly what a band like this needs. The Book of Dead Names play a style of hardcore that more or less owes itself to early 90s Gravity stuff, but has moved way past that. Basically this band utilizes driving discordant guitars against a competent rhythm section, with just the right kind of chaotically screamed vocals on top. There's even some keyboards up in the mix, but not too up in the mix, as you usually have to listen for them, and they usually only act to complement what the guitars are already doing. I think this band's strongest points are just in their basic song structure. Every song is written and organized well, all the transitions smooth and cohesive. A sometimes overlooked aspect of this brand of hardcore, but one that keeps this batch of songs memorable rather than a forgettable array of mess and noise. They also know just the right times to hit you with some melody and hook. Nothing really new here, but this record is a good example of how just doing something well can sometimes seem original. The band features ex-members of Song of Zarathustra and The Infinity Dive, and I would think fans of either band would enjoy this immensely. (Blood of the Young, PO Box 14411, Minneapolis, MN 55414)

JR Ewing - *Ride Paranoia* LP

JR Ewing's last major release, *The Perfect Drama* 10", firmly put them on map as one of the better bands in the chaotic emo hardcore world. That being said, I had high hopes for this full length coming out roughly two years later. I've listened to this record about ten times now, and I can't shake my initial fear that I was a little disappointed by it. I was really expecting a big powerful record from JR Ewing. Instead I feel like I got a record that had that potential but is mired down in thin, jangly, and crunchy guitars. To be fair, though, this record is still a cut above the average. The songs are good and I imagine they could come off much more powerful live. Those that have enjoyed this band's rhythmic and driving chaos in the past will most likely still enjoy this record, which lends itself a little more melody than past efforts. I would even say I like it, but I had high expectations and I think this record could have been better. JR Ewing, by all accounts, had a successful stint on the West Coast some months back, and I'm hoping that they will make it to the East Coast soon as I'm sure they would be shown a rocking good time. (GSL, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177)

Racebannon/Song of Zarathustra split LP

Racebannon offers up four tracks, two of which are noise, not so different from what Black Dice has been doing lately, and the other two having "traditional song structure." All the tracks seem to hold up pretty well on their own, but I don't necessarily see the relevance of the noise tracks to the songs. Not the worst thing in the world, but as I understand it, these four songs are part of a larger set of songs that make up a rock opera of sorts. Possibly one needs to hear these songs in their entirety to put the puzzle together. Otherwise, Racebannon on this record sounds consistent with the last few releases. A little bit jammy at times, and erratic as all hell when they play fast. I think one of the strong points of this band has always been the layered vocals, which end up coming off like multiple schizophrenic voices all competing for space inside the listener's brain. Of the few lyrics I could pick out was "heroin is so lower class, oxycontin is much more chic." I like it when bands keep me updated on what drugs are cool. It helps me out when I go to parties, although I'm guessing these lyrics are in the third person and at least a little bit sarcastic.

The Song of Zarathustra side of this record is where it's at.

If you haven't heard this band yet, but you find yourself a fan of the genres this column is attempting to cover, than I highly recommend that you go out and purchase this record or SOZ's *A View from High Tides* LP. SOZ has always played hardcore competently reminiscent of Swing Kids or VSS, but with these last two releases I think they managed to put their own stamp on it. Their ability to compose complex songs that contain both melody and power leads to some tunes that you can straight up rock out to, yet they retain a sense of purpose beyond that immediate visceral urge. This is the kind of hardcore band that writes well enough that they could easily bridge genre in terms of appeal. I'm disappointed to have heard they broke up as I think they could have continued on and produced another excellent LP. At least they went out at the top of the game. (Level Plane, PO Box 4329, Philadelphia, PA 19118)

Anton Bordman 7"

This record is comprised of eight songs belted out by a two-piece bass-and-drums outfit from Providence, RI. I find it hard to describe the music on this record, and that's a good thing. The songs continue to challenge the listener even after you become familiar with them. There is a lot of strength in the rhythm of this record. The songs are intricate and jazzy, but you still want to pump your fist in the air and scream along. I don't really want to compare these guys to other bands, but I think fans of chaotic Florida bands such as Combat Wounded Veteran, Palatka, and End of the Century Party would dig this. I've had the privilege to see these guys play many times, and live they are way more powerful than this record is capable of displaying, so don't miss your opportunity if they come to your town. Big props to the record sleeves for being screened so well that you can barely tell they're hand made. It's nice to see this kind of effort go into packaging. (Clean Plate Records, PO Box 9461, North Amherst, MA 01059 USA)

Panthers - *Let's Get Serious* 12" EP

This record put a big smile on my face the first time I gave it a proper listen. Panthers are taking a big step forward with these five new songs, and appear to have finally become the band they always wanted to, or were trying to be. I liked these guys' first record, but it didn't really live up to the power or passion that the songs had when I saw them live. This recording lives up to the potential Panthers have for being the loud, noisy, sexy, yet well-composed rock band that they are. I think Panthers have moved into territory that is uniquely their own, but for those who need points of reference, imagine the recklessness of MC5 and the Stooges mixed with the punk rock sensibility of Fugazi or Drive Like Jehu. I don't know why but I even want to say I hear a little bit of CAN in there somewhere. I hesitate to say that Panthers sounds like any of these bands though—they merely employ some of the same concepts and elements of said great bands to come up with a totally different conclusion. This record does a good job of showing that they can write intricate and interesting songs that you can still shake your ass to. Panthers should be touring the West Coast in August, so do yourself the favor, check them out, and get your freak on. (Dim Mak, PO Box 348, Hollywood, CA 90078)

OK, so that's the reviews for this month. By the time this comes out I suppose we'll be right in the middle of summer tour season. If you missed the Transistor Transistor/Light the Fuse and Run tour, let's just say you fucked up. I would stake my personal reputation (do I even have one?) on the Transistor Transistor live show. Sinaloa is a new and upcoming band out of Boston that will be hitting the road for almost a month this summer, I recommend checking them out as well.

I just want to emphasize again that this column is based on reader submission, so please send in material for review. I'll review any format that I can play at home, and am happy to get demos. If you're going to send a CD-R demo please try to do something to dress up the packaging. There are few things more uninspiring than a CD-R demo that consist of only a plastic case and band name in marker. I can't promise I'll like it or even refrain from tearing it apart, but regardless of the outcome, hopefully we'll all learn something along the way. Don't forget to send copies to MRR for normal review as well. I know that's a lot of copies, but you get your name in print twice, so fuck it, right?

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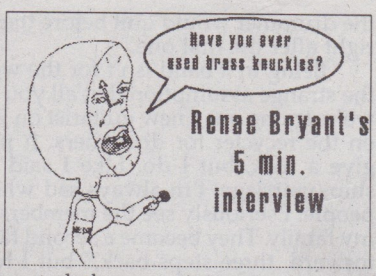


When I miss numerous months of columns it becomes extremely taxing to decide where to start one off. Usually I start with some lame sentence like the one I just typed. The last column I did was in February of 2003. I was just crowned "Teacher of the Year" at my elementary school. I had also recounted the amazing experience of some of my former students, now in sixth grade, coming to one of our shows. Fast-forward three months. It is incredible how time flies. I thought it was quite the surreal experience being voted "Teacher of the Year" at my school site. I kept thinking how cool it was that I was a punk and "Teacher of the Year." I thought how great it was and how I wouldn't have to worry about someone finding out about my other life, etc. As "Teacher of the Year," I was set. Then it happened. One fine day in early March, my principal interrupted my morning reading comprehension lesson on cause and effect. She pointed at me and gave me the thumbs up. I just kept thinking, "What the hell is she doing?" Then to my dismay, into my classroom walked the assistant to the superintendent, the head of curriculum and instruction, the head of the BTSA program, my principal, vice-principal, etc. My students were tripping along with me.

"You did it!" the principal proclaimed.

Holy shit. I couldn't believe it. Once I earned the title at my school site, I had to compete at district level. The district level competition consisted of seven essays and a seven-person panel interview process. I did that in February, came back to my site, and told my students not to be disappointed if I didn't get "Teacher of the Year" at the district level. Well, somehow this punk rock girl must have interviewed well. You are now reading the column of the official "Elementary School Teacher of the Year" for my entire district. It's fucking crazy. It's like a spelling bee. I just turned in my essays for the county level competition. I'll find out by the end of May if I am chosen as the County Teacher of the Year. The next steps are state and national. It's weird. You teach because you like making a difference in the lives of children. You never expect any honors in teaching. There are not any award ceremonies for punk rockers and you don't expect any in teaching either. Did I already say this is weird?

A week before I was named "Elementary School Teacher of the Year," we played with Leftover Crack. One day after that show my grandmother died. Two days after that show our bass player tried to commit suicide. He didn't succeed, but quit our band three days later. Life has a way of throwing you curve balls. Change seems to be the only constant in my life. We immediately began trying out bass players. We found Jared two weeks into the tryouts. He's even better than the last bass player. Sigh of relief; change is good.

Bands are so much like relationships. They are tremendously challenging. I do all the shit work for the band. You'd think, since I'm the singer, I'd be a little punk rock diva. No. I am a fucking workhorse. I do everything from booking shows and tours to cut-and-pasting the flyers and passing them out at shows. On our last tour I was the booker, the singer, the driver, the manager, and the fucking merchandise girl. I only asked a band member to take care of the email list. He recently came to practice and informed me that this responsibility was getting in the way of his "guitar playing" and he wanted to just "show up and play the guitar from now on." His last statement was "I think it's time we find a manager." No fucking shit. If it were that easy we'd already have one. Now mind you, this is a guy that does not have to work. His daddy is the general manager/scout for the Chicago Cubs. He owns a condo that faces PCH in Huntington Beach. He spends his leisure time watching Jeopardy, professional sporting events, and MTV. Did I know all of this about him when he got into the band? Of course not. So after he makes his declaration of independence from the workload, I had what I like to refer to as a seizure. This just means that I freaked out, called him a diva, and reminded him that in the year that he was in this band he never wrote one song (luckily we have two guitarists). I questioned his television schedule. That did it. He quit the band. I'm freaking out because by this time the drummer left, saying he didn't want to listen to us bicker. My birthday shows were in four days. I thought for certain

the drummer would quit before these shows. He didn't. He quit right after the first one.

Being in a band isn't for the weak. Some people are under the strange assumption that all you have to do is show up. Now we're trying out a new guitarist on Wednesday and have ads out on the recycler for drummers. It probably sounds like I don't give a fuck, but I do. Like I said the band is like a relationship/marriage. I'm always sad when it doesn't work out with people. I seriously see the members of my band more than I see my family. They become a second family. I would say "two steps forward, three steps back," but I haven't cancelled any of our future shows and haven't any intention of doing so. I always try to keep a positive mindset that somehow everything will work out for the best, and as a teacher at my school always says, "this too shall pass." I've been in punk bands for ten years now. I love singing, writing, and performing. I think punk rock can be really important and meaningful. It inspired and empowered me so much. I always want to be a part of that. I know a simple answer would be to bow out. I just can't. It's in my veins.

On a different subject, my new boyfriend is nine years younger than me, but extremely intelligent and mature for his age. He was recounting a phase of his life to me, a phase of going to strip clubs and getting chair dances. This made me think of my own strip club experience. Not as a dancer (though I did that for two whole weekends), but as a patron. I remember the first time I went to strip club was with my male college friends, who I had also gone to high school with. They approached me academically, asserting that they needed to interview a stripper for a sociology class but they would only be interviewed by a woman. Now I know that it was bullshit, but then it sounded reasonable to me. They needed me to go for academic reasons. Sure, no problem. It was a fun and interesting experience. The next time I would be in a strip club, as a patron, would be three years later. I was dating this guy who worked at SST and sang for Greg Ginn's then-new band, El Bad. It was my boyfriend's birthday. Greg, Chuck, and the SST crew wanted to take him to Fritz's in OC. He wanted to bring me along, much to their dismay.

"Oh, why do you have to bring your girlfriend?" they whined.

He brought me and I brought my stack of one-dollar bills. We all sat around the stage getting our extra-close performance. Some of the girls were smart and played up to me (increasing their eroticism in the men's eyes); some of the women ignored me and did not receive their stupid dollar. Suddenly, the SST guys thought it was pretty cool that he had brought his girlfriend. Then they announced that we were going to leave. We couldn't leave. I had decided to get my first chair dance. I found this really hot brunette. She was giving a chair dance to this really big African American man, who had the demeanor of a football player or a drug dealer because of all the gold necklaces he was wearing. I sheepishly approached her and asked her if I could pay her for a chair dance. The man said it was cool. She started her dance. I sat with my legs together with a funny little grin on my face.

"Open your legs up, let her get up in there," the big man said.

I instantly did what I was told. It was crazy. She finished up, and I felt proud of myself for having my first chair dance. From that moment on the Greg, Chuck, and the SST crew considered me just one of the guys. After that experience, if I was bored and feeling naughty after working at the dungeon, I would go to the local strip club, have a bottle of water and tip the dancers, climaxing my evening with a little chair dance. Hell, I even dated a stripper. Funny. I haven't gone to a strip club in four years. I hadn't even thought of it until my boyfriend admitted having a strip club phase of his life. So that night, after a nice dinner, being girly-fied in my little black dress and heels, I gave him what I remembered from experience as a superb chair dance, with the additional luxuries you receive from having your girlfriend give it to you. Life is good.

When you haven't written a column for a while, you kind of lose your rhythm. I'll try to get my rhythm back next month. Until then you can contact me at webmistress@ontherag.net (and I do have a computer in my house now, so I will respond), www.ontherag.net <http://www.ontherag.net/> , and PO Box 251, Norco, CA 92860-0251. You can also check out some of the reviews All or Nothing HC got for our CD on the website. I'm feeling validation on all sorts of levels now.

Crying In My Beer

This album was released by an independent record label with absolutely no ties to any corporations or big business interests. SCREECHING WEASEL supports the independent music scene by dealing with its record labels, promoters, and fanzines in all aspects of our business and by recognizing it as a financially viable and ethically superior alternative to the greedy, arrogant major label entertainment machines.

That's what it says on the back of my SCREECHING WEASEL *Wiggle* LP. I got the record at some point before Lookout! inked a deal with RED Distribution, a part of the Sony corporation. I pulled it out recently looking for the song "One Step Beyond." I guess I had forgotten about that paragraph. Ever since, it's been kind of nagging at me. I wonder if new copies of the records still have those words on 'em. When they repress that thing up, with pallets of compact discs heading to Sony, does it still say that shit on the back?

I've also been thinking about the scores of people with SCREECHING WEASEL tattoos. That has got to be a bum out. The cartoon weasel with the cigarette hanging out of his mouth sits right next to those words on the back of my record. I guess the image used to mean one thing, now it means another. Either way, it's still inked on the arms and legs of these people. Sheesh.

So, I guess the smart and informative thing to do for the column would be to call up Lookout! or find a store around here that carries the record. You know, see what the fuck is going on. I haven't done either of those things. I did make a half-hearted attempt to find out about it on a message board on the Internet. But, I don't know. I have no idea if new copies come with or without the "absolutely no ties to any corporations or big business interests" bit. I'm not sure I want to know.

You know? What are the possible outcomes? On one hand, they could have left it on there; a totally gross prospect. I can just picture the boxes sitting there in a Sony warehouse complete with the impassioned harangue about how indie is an "ethically superior alternative to the greedy, arrogant major label entertainment machines." Great. There's a real *fuck you* to the system; a big wrench in their gears.

On the other hand, they could have taken it off. That's fucking gross too. I'm not sure which is grosser. So, on this hand SCREECHING WEASEL and Lookout! sort of skulk back from this bold declaration they made. The absence of the words acting as a kind of retraction: "Maybe this isn't so financially viable and morally superior."

I don't want to know. Either way it's a fucking bum-out.

Craig Hughes Joined A Frat. How Could He Sellout Like That?

So, what the fuck? Why the up-in-arms-ism about at it all? I mean, this particular shit with the SCREECHING WEASEL record is just fucking dumb and insulting. That's just fucking stupid to put that shit on there, all badass, only to sniffle and backpedal later. That particular brand of blatant and creepy hypocrisy always gets me all worked up. But besides the knee-jerk reaction of waving your finger and yelling about sellouts, there are some real logical reasons why that shit sucks.

Punk. Fucking shit, right? We have this totally fucking mint thing of ours. As fucking retarded as it might sound, it's for the punks and by the punks. It's a place for us: for misfits, for people who think differently, people who are iconoclastic. It's a safe place to express yourself, be yourself, and fucking do shit and contribute. The punk scene or punk community or whatever you want to call it has been here for years and years. It's been here, existing outside the mainstream. And for me, I think that's an important part of it. The fact that kids, punkers, run an entire self-sufficient network of bands, zines, record labels, distros, venues, is mint. And the shit's international! That's nuts. The whole thing is fucking amazing.

A big part of what makes our community possible is the economics of punk. By existing outside the mainstream, without the help of major label money and etc., we've been able to exist and put out records and do tours and make zines even when punk isn't the "in thing." This is made is possible by a network of independent record labels, publishers, distributors, promot-

ers, and mom and pop record shops.

Real problems arise with the balance of this economy when you introduce the *arrogant major label entertainment machines*, as SCREECHING WEASEL calls them. So, let's say that a punk label with some of the biggest selling titles in punkdom stops going through their indie distributors and begin exclusive (or even the popular de facto exclusive) distribution deals with majors. Right off the bat, this obviously hurts the indie distributors. Now the distributor's store accounts are getting this label's product directly from the major, essentially cutting out the indie distributor. A lot of times the indie distributor will buy copies from the major, and sell them at a reduced mark up, but in much lower quantity. So, they are left making no money from the release, or much, much less.

The label going through the major is also going to hurt the mom and pop shops that have carried and supported punk through the less profitable times. Often, a large percentage of a major label's distributor sales come from selling directly to chain stores like Borders Books, Sam Goody, etc. This hurts the sales of a mom and pop shop. Convenience, lower prices, more foot traffic, advertising, and other shit make it difficult for the mom and pop to compete with the chain store.

I think there are arguments for how this shit affects other parts of our community, but economically, I think distributors and mom and pop record shops are hit hardest. So, that's a very simple view of how they are affected. But what the fuck does that mean for punk?

Well, the more big releases that are taken away from indie distributors, the less profitable they become. They have to shrink; their ability to carry smaller labels and bands, and take chances on new stuff diminishes. This shit, little by little, leads to less diversity in stores and mailorders. It makes it increasingly difficult for bands to communicate with our community through putting out records, which to this point has been a huge part of what punk is.

Stores are hurt too. Our mom and pop shops, like None Of The Above, the store my pal used to run, are put in a shitty position. As the bigger punk releases that they count on for coin are being bought at the chains, they lose money. Their ability to even carry punk disappears. Just like the distributors, they are way less likely to take chances on ordering unproven sellers, diminishing diversity on the shelves. What's worse, mom and pop shops just aren't able to cut it anymore. They are going out business. The two indie shops that carried punk around here have both gone under in the past year.

So, the end game sucks. The popularity of punk has made it viable for majors to jump in and take over aspects of our economy. That weakens our distributors and stores to a point that we lose them. Then when punk isn't profitable anymore, the majors move on to whatever it is that's going to make them money next. We're left with dick. Our stores are gone, and our distributors are fewer in number and not as effective. Fuckin' A, dude.

There's a bigger picture issue too. How the fuck can punk be about bucking the status quo, and questioning the establishment when we are the fucking establishment; when we are part of the mainstream bullshit? How the fuck does that work? Shit's not cool, man.

I mean, yeah, maybe I'm not the smartest dude, and maybe I didn't lay it all out super-detailed and crap, but there is truth in what I'm saying here. I know there is. And I have to imagine that this is at least some of the crap that SCREECHING WEASEL was talking about when they wore that shit on their sleeve for the Wiggle album.

"We Do What We Want, Even If We Get Punched"

You know what? I was talking to my buddy the other day on the phone. We were talking about a lot of this shit. You know, the economy of punk and crap. I found myself sort of arguing a point I've never argued before. It's a point that people have brought up to me before, but I always thought it sounded like a bullshit copout. The idea is fuck 'em. Just fuck them, you know?. Let the fucking majors come and sign crummy bands and market "punk." Let them co-opt our fucking sounds, or style, our haircuts, whatever. Let major label owned distributors like Caroline Distribution and RED Distribution come and distribute "punk" labels. Sure it's going to erode some of the network of how we conduct the business of DIY punk, but fuck 'em. Who cares? As long as there are fucking basements, there'll be punk. As long as there are guitars and photocopy machines we'll have punk. As long as you can mail mix tapes and shit to your pals there will be punk. As long as there are bullshit jocks and stupid shit to rebel against, we'll be fuckin' punk rockers. Four AM in a deserted parking lot guarantees us punk! Hell yeah. Fuck you.

My friends and I call that shit doing what you want, even if you get punched. Fuckin' A. So a few hours after talking to my pal about shit, I found myself taking pulls off a Corona at the bar where my cousin slings booze. I always think about the MINUTEMEN when I drink Corona. It was around 11 o'clock and in walked a totally rad punker girl that I had briefly met a few months back. I should have finished my Corona and went home and gotten a good night's sleep for work the following day. Instead, for the next eight hours I did what I wanted, pretty much knowing that I'd be fucking punched the next day. Punk. RED might be distributing SCREECHING WEASEL stuff, but they can't touch this kind of shit. Fuck 'em.

So the rad punker girl's name turns out to be Lauren. Hot. We did some shots of whiskey and I found myself explaining how I was planning an elaborate 3-D tattoo of the cover of SCREECHING WEASEL's "Wiggle" album cover on my forearm. The idea is that the sticks of dynamite actually kind of wrap around my arm, forming an image that will make my arm look like an actual bundle of dynamite. Nobody gave a shit about my tattoo ideas. I guess me and the whiskey didn't care, so I kept going. I explained my idea for a fetus armband tattoo where I'd have five little fetuses on my arm. Each one would have their umbilical cord fashioned into a noose that hangs the fetus in front of it.

Lauren was mint. She was rocking a beat-up pair of vegan low top vans with dark denim jeans cuffed just above the ankle. She had two shirts on. The top one was a kind of tight thrift store looking thing. It had medium-size red and blue stripes. The opening for the neck part was kind of big. I think you call it a scoop neck. Under the top shirt was the bottom shirt. It was fucking hot. It was this white tank top. You could see the tiny little strap holding it up through the scoop neck. It had a little pink bow on it too. It looked so rad. She had blue eyes. She had tightly cropped bangs and a ponytail. Her shit was dyed black. She had those earrings that stretch your ears out and filled 'em up with a circle thing. She accessorized with a black patched-up sweatshirt and bag with a coffee mug attached to it. The coffee mug had an AK Press sticker on it, and the fact that it was hanging off her bag made me feel like she was a hobo.

We talked and talked and talked. We argued the finer points of whether or not CD manufacturing plants should turn down work from Resistance Records. We talked about how she grew up in New York City and how she moved to a small town in eighth grade. We talked about the PROPAGANDHI / I SPY split 10". We talked about zines and punching each other in the face. It was awesome. Eventually her friend went home, and we were left alone to walk back to my house and listen to records. We listened to STRUGGLE. She said she never heard PLOW UNITED or JOLT. I was so jealous that she got to hear those dudes for the first time, but I already knew the songs. We listened to an old JON COUGAR CONCENTRATION CAMP 7" and a RUSTWEILER split 7". I got to play her the KRUPTED PEASANT FARMERZ song "Bear Named Dog" before we started making out. I explained that TREPAN NATION from Chicago was way better than DILLINGER FOUR. I put on *Banish Gods from Skies and Capitalists from Earth* and we made out some more.

We stopped the lip-lock long enough for me drive her back to her pal's house where she was staying while she was in town. It was about four o'clock. We made out more. Then we made out some more and decided that maybe we should drive around town without our clothes on. Four in the morning is so mint. Four in the morning driving around Setauket naked is really fucking mint. It was, like, us out there with dudes in trucks delivering newspapers and bread and other stuff. I'm pretty sure the *Newsday* guy saw Lauren's boobs. We'd been driving around for a while when we decided that the beach is a way better place for naked people then a stoplight.

So we headed over to West Meadow Beach, where one time H2O played a free show and I made $300 selling records from my distro. It was low tide and cold as hell. We put our clothes back on and took our shoes off. We walked on the beach waiting for the sun to come up. It was low tide. We found a mooring in the sand like the one my boat used to be hooked up to. We thought it was an anchor and tried like hell to dig it up. Walking around the beach down there, arm in arm at the beginning of the day made me feel like I was in some weird erectile dysfunction

advertisement. We totally missed the sunrise. I guess it was obscured behind some bluff. Dudes told me later that West Meadow is good for sunsets, not sunrises. Doh. Anyway, we went to get breakfast. At this point it was six in the morning. We scored a free meal at the deli because my dad's pal recognized me and knew that it was my birthday earlier in the week. Fuckin' A. She was vegan as heck, but I was dying for some bacon with my eggs. While she was in the bathroom, I added it to my order. She wasn't bummed at all and I was relieved.

So, at around seven o'clock I finally dropped Lauren off. It was so fucking rad. We exchanged mailing addresses and promised to send mix tapes. Shithouse. Punk fucking rock.

I felt so fucking alive that night. It's a few days later now, and I still feel some of the residual energy and possibility from it. The night after that, instead of staring at my TV before I went to sleep, I threw a record on and just stared at the ceiling instead. It felt good. The next day I found out that my June copy of *MaximumRockNRoll* got made out all over. It was all wrinkled and fucked up like people had been rolling all over it. That felt good too.

My Name Is Lubrano is done! It's a collection of the first 15 columns I did for *MaximumRockNRoll*. It's like 75 pages long and has all the columns plus shitty punk layouts and pictures of stuff like MANOWAR, Lubrano, Fran Drescher, Beaker, pills, MINUTEMEN, traffic, record pressing machinery, prosthetic forearms, and much more. It's available on a sliding scale price of $3-$6 ppd. directly from me at the address below.

Drunk too much: Wells Tipley, PO Box 772, East Setauket, NY, 11733 USA. Or e-mail me at manowells@hotmail.com.

END NOTES:

1. Including the endnotes, I said SCREECHING WEASEL ten times this month. That's not bad for fewer than 3000 words.

2. I really think I need a definitive answer from the higher-ups at *MaximumRockNRoll* about the usage on "fuckin' A." Is the "a" capitalized or not? What kind of magazine are you running over there?

3. I'm 27 years old now. I had cake for my birthday with a picture of Roy Fokker from Robotech on it.

4. I saw Jason Lubrano go to see the EXECUTIONERS dressed in a black Puma jumpsuit with a VENOM shirt on underneath. What a fucking bonehead. I dropped him off a block away from his house. Idiot.

I have a couple of house keys, a car key, MRR key and PO box key on my basic key ring. These are the important keys in my life, ones that I use at least once a month. They're attached by a little nubbie thing to a tiny star trek looking device that allows a multitude of key rings to be snapped together and that also provides a press button light to find keyholes. In other words, a keychain. I have another key ring always attached, that being for a small white plastic skull I purchased from Archie McPhee a decade ago, a to-scale replica made even more lifelike by grime in all the right places from the years I've carried it in my pocket. Upon seeing the skull on my keychain, a well-dressed Latino gent approached me in an airport once, pointed to it and remarked: "If you believe, if you truly believe, it has great power."

Then there's the key ring with all my work keys. It's huge and heavy, filled with keys that have "do not duplicate" stamped on them. Because I work in IT, I have to have access to all the computers, hence the Marley's ghost caricature. The work key ring easily triples the weight of my keychain. In turn, the keychain is a formidable weight in my pocket during the week. When I come home Friday evening, I detach my work keys from the rest of the keychain, which is suddenly light and lively. I can barely feel what's left in my pocket. The remaining keys represent some of the things I enjoy in my life, and as metaphor what it means for me to be alive. The work keys are what I have to do eight hours a day, forty hours a week so that I can have the other keys on my keychain. I dread putting the ugly weight of that work key ring on my keychain every Sunday night.

Many people would take pride in the size of that ring full of work keys, and not a few would see it as the defining ring on their keychain. Not me. They're incredibly, depressingly burdensome for me. I value that small collection of personal keys much more highly. I'd do anything to be able to ditch the work key ring and still somehow retain the personal key ring. So you see my overarching interest in this column's subject, abolishing work. At the same time, I'm aware of my authorial responsibilities to provide a little continuity from where I left things last month.

Life during wartime has always been class strife during wartime. Labor organizing and activism increased during every major war America has fought, at least since the first World War. I said last column we need to revive the class war on the home front as counterpoint to Junior Bush's endless world war against international terrorism, and equally endless occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. I also wrote that workers need to fight the capitalist ruling class through a general uprising using protest, direct action, sabotage, and class warfare, based upon an out-and-out rebellion against work itself. Finally, I promised this column to deal with how exactly that might be done.

I lied. That's because I forgot an important, indeed crucial step, that being dealing with the main objection to the idea of building a revolutionary labor movement around a demand for the abolition of work. Even phrased in purely Marxist terms—as the abolition of wage labor—the project has a distinctly pie-in-the-sky utopian quality that Marx himself was fond of criticizing and ridiculing in his day. Have I sunk to the "eclectic, average socialism" dismissed by Engels in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*?

You just might question my Marxist credentials when you realize my first argument for the abolition of work is based on human nature. For hundreds of thousands of years humanity existed as small, decentralized hunting-and-gathering bands or prehistoric agricultural communities (paleolithic/ mesolithic/ early neolithic time periods). Personal property existed under these primordial conditions, but private property in productive means was virtually unknown in these surprisingly egalitarian, communal societies. Now, I'm no brain dead primitivist. For the most part, life before recorded history was nasty, brutish and short, to paraphrase Thomas Hobbes. It was leisurely however, with people working on average 10-20 hours a week in order to exist, often quite comfortably.

Thanks in part to the sedentary lifestyle and increased population density resultant from the early neolithic agricultural revolution, we witness the rise of large-scale, centralized societies based on private property, the state and a ruling class beginning about 6,000 years ago. In other words, class society. Life remained nasty, brutish and short for the vast majority of people in these societies, whose workweek increased to 20-30 hours, and whose agricultural surpluses were expropriated with the help of state power to allow a ruling class to live in relative comfort and leisure. Indeed, we see no appreciable improvement in the lives of average folks (as measured by lifespan for instance) until the last century or so—during the consolidation of modern corporate/monopoly capitalism out of industrial capitalism—and then primarily in western Europe and north America. Meanwhile, the workweek has gone up to a minimum of 40 hours, and instead of agricultural surpluses, it's the surplus value of a worker's labor that is being expropriated with the backing of state power to keep a capitalist ruling class in luxury and privilege.

If my argument from human nature weren't mostly tongue-in-cheek, I'd insist this demonstrates that humans are primed for leisure, and that the last six millennia of human history have been an aberration. I'd further point out that work is such an anathema to people that it requires fanatical religious zealotry—in the form of the Puritan work ethic or vulgar Marxism or some such nonsense—if not out-and-out homelessness and starvation to convince people to waste their lives laboring for someone else. I'd cap my argument by contending that the revolt against work has been humanity's consistent historical response to such exploitation, from the peasant revolts of the middle ages through the Luddites of the early 1800's and the Wobblies of the early 1900's to today's slackers.

I'm not one to believe that people are born blank slates, to be formed entirely by their environment without biological influences, which means I do have a concept of human nature.

Marx also believed in human nature by the way, which he called species being. Rather than debate the nature of human nature though, I think it would be more constructive to point out that the present, worldwide productive capacity of global capitalism allows us to contemplate reducing the workweek back to 10-20 hours once again. Murray Bookchin in *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* and Andre Gorz in *A Farewell to the Working Class* presented arguments and sources to back up this contention. The fact that their research is outdated makes the case for capitalism's productive capacity permitting a drastic reduction of the workweek that much more cogent, given capitalism's aggressive expansion since those works were first published.

When coupled with the human nature argument above, the potential to abolish work by implementing global capitalism's full productive capacity transforms this thread into Marx's notion that human social development will experience a movement from primitive communism through class society to modern communism. I defend the potential for a post-scarcity communism latent in modern capitalism without holding that such a condition is an all-but-inevitable historical stage that humanity is destined to achieve, as Marx tended to do. But wait. Why am I using the abolition of work interchangeably with the idea of reducing the workweek to the minimum, socially necessary labor required to keep society and its members healthy and functioning? That brings us back to Karl Marx once again.

Labor, for Marx, was not merely the source of all economic wealth, but also an integral part of human identity. Humans create themselves, their community and their history through social labor. This is the highest form of labor, a creative process of putting ideas into action Marx called *praxis*. A more mundane form of labor—socially necessary labor—is the kind of collect-the-trash, fill-in-the-potholes activity intended to keep things running so that it is possible to engage in *praxis*. "Who will collect the trash?" is a question as important to communists as to anarchists as we'll see shortly. Finally, there's alienated labor, labor sold for a wage, or wage labor. In other words, labor as workers experience it under capitalism. Marx considered the abolition of wage labor absolutely essential for full human freedom and development, but while he talked about reducing socially necessary labor to a minimum, he did not consider such labor to be equivalent to the spirit killing, mind numbing, body crippling work of wage labor.

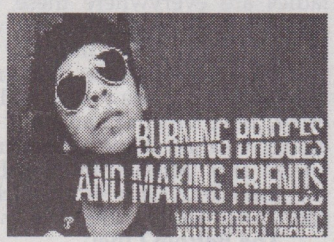
I can certainly understand these different kinds of labor. I can barely get through an eight-hour workday or a forty hour workweek at my day job without feeling completely sapped of all energy and vitality. Yet I've taken writing vacations where I spend 8-10-12 hours in front of my computer seven days a week working on my novel, and I come out of that experience reenergized and reinvigorated. The issue of socially necessary labor is a tricky one in all of this however. Andre Gorz embraced the vision of European Autonomy in *A Farewell to the Working Class* in which he contended that the working class's task is to abolish itself by abolishing wage labor and expanding the realm of autonomy to its maximum extent. Yet he also insisted that all socially necessary labor left over after the abolition of work must be managed in the realm of heteronomy, that is by the state, because it would be impossible to manage socially necessary labor at the intimate community level without resorting to the fanatical religious zealotry I mentioned above to convince people to do it. I take issue with some of Gorz's arguments, but they are by no means trivial.

Me, I think any successful revolt against work needs to demand everything from a reduction of the workweek to the abolition of wage labor. This is a matter of strategy though, which I'll discuss next column. Given the conundrums presented by socially necessary labor, not to mention the dreariness of such work, I tend to lump it into the same category of work as wage labor, seeking to abolish both. To this end, Marvin Garson had some choice thoughts in 1968 reflecting upon the revolutionary gang practice of the San Francisco Diggers:

"Every industry has its own inchoate underground of people who take pride in doing good work, who aren't in it just for the money, who get angry when their employers make them sacrifice quality for the sake of profit. Let that underground get together and suddenly a real alternative to corporate capitalism will exist. [...] Perhaps it's impossible to run a steel mill or an electric power plant in a free and creative way. In that case, run it automatically." [*San Francisco Express Times*; 7/13-17/68]

This is getting into the dubious area of trying to describe the future socialist society; exactly what Marx and Engels criticized Saint Simon, Fourier, Owen and other utopian socialists for doing with their elaborate blueprints for ideal communities. A good time to take my leave, with the promise that next column I'll finally get down to the strategy and tactics of a revolt against work.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... You can find the "lost" Hooligan column at the new, improved http://www.huahuacoyotl.com. To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligan3@mindspring.com.



Wow, slim pickin's this month. I'm getting ready to move in a few weeks so I haven't had my usual cash flow or an abundance of time to seek out much new stuff, so I'm going to continue with last month's rundown of the many wonderful things I have been comped, as well as one or two things I picked up myself. Geez, it's hot...

First up are the *Creatures Wanna Dance* and *Cretins Wanna Dance* comps out on Swindlebra Records out of the lovely Gunzburg, Germany. Apparently this label has been dealing that trashy euro garage / hot rod / scum guitar sound for a few years, but for some reason is just now getting around to sending their stuff to the States. Better late than never (or so I have been told). These comps are perfect summer time music. *Cretins* is more on the pop punk / poppy r 'n' r side of things, and just between you and me, is my favorite of the two. Featuring tunes by some of our favorite Euro pop punk bands like the BACKWOOD CREATURES, the APERS, the REEKYS, and RETARDED, as well as surf zombies the CAVE 4, rock & roll retards the mighty DIRTSHAKES and SCUMBAG ROADS, and let's not forget the French pop sensations, the lovely CURLEE WURLEE. What you get here is a summertime soundtrack to your boogie night dance parties, backyard BBQs and Slip 'n' Slide Sunday afternoons. You know the score with the APERS, they are Holland's pop punk kings. You know the deal with the DIRTSHAKES, Germany's kings of the Boogaloo. Both bands lead by example and pretty much set the tone for the entire comp, but CURLEE WURLEE, they remind me of the SHITBIRDS, and that ain't no bad thing either. Dual cute girly vocals make me smile as I take another sip of my blended ice drink. Do I even have to tell you to check this out? C'mon! *Creatures* features a who's who of the Swindlebra stable and the German trash rock scene, RODRIGUEZ, the GRIZZLY ADAMS BAND, REETURNERS, and whole lot more. This is music to flash your tattoos to. Not as user friendly as *Cretins*, but that's not to say this does not rock. Find out for yourself. (www.swindlebra.de)

Swindelbra also sent me a 10" by the SCUMBAG ROADS (whom you should remember from the *Cretins* comp). This thing smokes. Lo-fi, trashy, and catchy as SARS *cough!* This reminds me of the HIGH SCHOOL rockers all hopped up on hot rod pills. This band makes me wanna be a bad ass and get cliché tattoos and sideburns. Oh yeah. Totally makin' me wanna be cool. I'd better turn this off before I get a false sense of empowerment.

The PEACHY KEENS from Denmark sent me a six-song CD-R a few months back... I've put off writing about it because I'm lazy. Anyway these kids serve up the Euro-pop punk style buttery sweet, much like their tasty cookies. These kids really love their Lookout!—drum beats lifted from the late Hough O'Neil, noodly guitar straight from Weasel, and maybe a little nod to Jeff Ott and Aaron Cometbus in the song structure department (especially on "Stupid Girl"). Most people out there will just dismiss this as brain dead pop punk ala the QUEERS, but these kids really pull out the stops and throw out a few tricks Joe and the Guys-Behind-Him would never even think of. Good job with that—now send me cookies! (thepeachykeends@hotmail.com)

Knock Knock Records just released a TRAVOLTAS acoustic "party" album called, ironically enough, *Travoltas Party*. More or less, the Travoltas wanted to do what the BEACH BOYS did and

record an acoustic "jam session," complete with drunk friends and beer. At best they show you just how great this band can really be, at worst, they come off like a crappy BEACH BOYS cover band. Half the album is covers, BAD RELIGION (they do a version of "Sorrow" that actually sounds incredible, complete with farfisa breakdown), an ass load of Beach Boys tunes (gag), and Adam Schlisenger ("That Thing You Do"—I love FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE). Most of the originals sound like the Beach Boys covers, so it's kinda hard to distinguish them, but there are at least two originals that stand head and shoulders above the rest, so I guess that evens the field. Fans of the band will love this, but people like me who are still in the middle of the road with this band will need convincing. (www.knockknock-records.com)

What's the deal with the fucking RIFF RANDELLS? Those ladies are everywhere these days. The UK's very own No Dancing Records just released a purddy neon yellow 7" by the girls (and boy). Much like they drive, the opening for the sleeve was on the wrong side. Being mildly compulsive and neurotic, this bothers me like you wouldn't believe. I feel like I'm smothering...deep breaths... anyway, aside from the backwards packaging, you get a two previously released tracks "Lethal Lip Gloss" and "Mississippi Hott Dog," both of which are on their 10" and CDEP. Only worth picking up if they are on MTV very soon. EBay here I come! (www.nodancing.co.uk)

The Bottom Line:

* That's it for this month. I've gotta go finish packing. I'll be leaving for Sacramento on July 1, so anyone who wants to send me anything, just send it to *MRR*'s address with my name on it. Next issue I will have my new address up. I'd tell you now but I don't remember if it's unit A or B and I don't want my neighbors taking my mail.

* The Radio Beats are the bastard sons of the Spaceshits, Teengenerate, and the Devil Dogs. Trust me on this. They are really that good. Check them out.

* revmanic@cs.com

* Bye bye East Bay! Hello Oak Park!

The story so far: *In my eternal search for the holy nook, I've enrolled in a one-day all-male* Opening Your Chakras *workshop. Taking the workshop with me are:*

Starflame, the leader. He's about sixty, with a grey beard and close-cropped white hair.

John, a squat Mexican-looking man. He's got nice cream-colored skin. The rest is not so nice.

THE FAT MAN is a blond guy with an enormous belly on an otherwise normal body.

The only couple is Kal and Jerry. Kal is about six and a half feet tall, with wide shoulders and a chest that belongs at the WWF. Jerry is a good foot shorter than Kal. His blond hair sweeps casually over his forehead. He's got bright blue eyes, a perky little nose, and no chin. His most striking features are his pendulous breasts.

Ned is a Richard Mulligan look-alike.

Alan is an attractive Brazilian/Negro-looking guy. He's one of the two best in show.

Gramps, his real name Ed, is Starflame's assistant. I wonder how he made it here without a walker.

Vinny is the other attractive one. About 30, he's skinny, with almost girl's hips. Not as tall as Alan, he's a sleek blond with fine assets.

There are two other guys in this group. Both bland salt-and-pepper haired men, in their early 40s.

And me.

In a prelude to the chakras, the guru rolls a talking stick to Gramps. Then he passes it someone else. When we receive the stick, we introduce ourselves, talking about one good thing, one bad thing, and then another good thing. I talk about my forth-coming CD. Everyone else talks about the weather.

The meat of the chakra opening takes place on the stage of a theater on Christopher Street. We've explored each other's third eye (forehead), communication (throat), and center (heart) chakras. For the last one, we've removed each other's shirts.

Each chakra opening requires some preliminary exercises. Then we touch our partner at the chakra place, and tap tap tap it, to wake it up.

Now we're on the sex chakra, located "where the top of the penis meets the body."

Starflame has removed Gramps' pants, showing him to have more long than just longevity. The rest of us are in two concentric circles. I'm in the inner one. I ended last month's adventure with these two paragraphs:

I face away from Alan. He starts massaging my belly, then my navel, then lower. As he massages, he presses his body up against mine. I can feel his limpness against the small of my back. I press against him. Blood flows to the good parts

The young man reaches around and lowers my Levis. Then my black Fruit of the Looms.

"Do you want to keep your socks on?" asks Alan. I shake my head.

The head shaking and de-socking gives me a chance to look around and check out the others. I lose. No, I win! Here I am with a looker. Fuck that size stuff. Open my chakra baby!

"Now switch," says Starflame, moving in front of Gramps. "I want the outer circle to undress the inner. Massage downward until you get to the waist. While undressing your partner, try to maintain chakra contact."

Gramps demonstrates, reaching around Starflame. His palms run over the guru's breasts, moving in two circles, like cleaning a windshield. He rubs those nipples into hardness. Then he rubs lower. To the sternum. To the softly round belly. To the belt.

The senior citizen then unhooks that belt. Then, with the right hand massaging the other man's bellybutton, Gramps uses the other hand to unzip and lower the holyman's khakis. Rubbing ever lower, he kneads his hands over the sage's stomach. Then lower, stroking the holy white boxer's down to Starflame's sagacious ankles. Our leader removes his own socks and says to those of us in the double circle, "Now you."

Alan turns away from me, giving me a view of his perfect V-shaped back. I press against him, rubbing my hands over his smooth belly, feeling a slight roundness peaking out over the belt. It's smooth and sexier than a gym-made six-pack.

The belt is one of those grab-claw types, not a buckle. I fumble a bit. When it finally falls open, I unhook the pants top, unzip, tooth by ecstatic tooth, then guide them slowly down his hips. Alan wears loose blue boxers. Oh so natural against his hickory skin. Slowly, I lower them. What a vision! Two strong thighs come together in a tight hairless valentine. My lower chakra begins to plump.

I keep massaging, occasionally running lower, grazing the good stuff, pretending my hand slips from its prescribed orbit.

"Now, I want the inner circle to face the outer one," says Starflame, facing the naked, endowed-but-drooping Gramps.

I turn.

"Now sit on the floor and hold each other's cock in your hand," he continues. He demonstrates on Gramps's longevity. "Pull it gently and then touch the sex chakra."

Starflame and Gramps sit on the floor facing each other. Starflame rests his heels on either side, and slightly behind Gramps. Gramps tries to assume the same position, but struggles to separate his legs wide enough. Starflame gently helps the man open his thighs. A quiet "Oy" escapes from his lips.

Once adjusted, the V of their crotches are very close. Starflame rests Gramps' quarter-pounder in the palm of his left hand and pulls it gently toward him.

"I want you to find the place right at the top where the penis meets the body," says Starflame.

He dips his fingers into the depths of the grey pubic hair in front of him. Gently pulling with the left hand, Starflame touches the right middle finger to the other man's sex chakra. Tap tap tap.

"Just tap tap tap that chakra," says Starflame. "You'll feel it open, releasing that energy all through your body."

Mine is opening on its own, though I wouldn't mind a little tapping... and tapping I get.

Alan and I sit facing each other. We reach crotchward and palm each other's good part. By this time, my popcorn shrimp has improved to a slightly more respectable McNugget. Alan is less turgid, but oh so well shaped.

We reach across the empty space to copy the demonstration. I hold his hefty pig in a blanket in the palm of my left hand. With

my right hand, I feel through his dark curlies to the chakra point.

He places his right index finger on my opening chakra. I adjust it anyway, holding his wrist and wriggling the finger just upside the good part.

His limpness slowly stretches, like a balloon inflating in slow motion. I must be reaching his inner chakraness.

Alan's tap taping is having a tough time. Each tap hits me on the backstroke. I'm up to about 80 degrees, turning slightly purple at the tip. Alan's is still on the floor, though more solid and full-bodied than a minute ago.

Suddenly, an ecstatic chill runs from my thighs to my shoulders and back again. My body shakes. An orgasm without ejaculation. Without being fully firm. Wow!

With the shake, my sex chakra muscles tighten. My tumescent tuber gives a little flip. A little BOING. My corpus cavernosa slaps against Alan's flexor digiti minimi brevis.

I think to myself, "here I am sitting naked on the floor facing an attractive guy, also naked. In the room are a dozen other guys, one of them attractive. Half of us face the other half, and we're tapping our partner on the dick. Tap tap tap. Nobody says a word. Just tap tap tap. Like it's an afternoon stroll in the park.

"OK," says Starflame, "it's time for the last chakra. The root chakra. Change partners."

Shit!

We all stand. Re-forming the two concentric circles. Trying to keep my eyes focused someplace proper, I smile a thanks at Alan. He smiles back, giving a little bow. The inner circle stays in the same place. The outer circle moves.

Alan moves to the left. I'm now with one of the two nebbishy guys.

"The last chakra is called the taint," says our guru.

"It's called that," he continues, "because it taint your balls and it taint your asshole."

I laugh. Too loudly it turns out, because everyone else turns to look at me.

"It's right at the spot called the perineum. It's your connection with the earth. Energy from this point goes from your body to the ground."

He raises his hands like Charlton Heston in *The Ten Commandments*.

"Now the outer circle face your partner in the inner circle and reach between his legs. Lift his balls and put your finger on the chakra. Inner circle, if need be, adjust your partner's touch."

I fiddle with the guy in front of me. Meanwhile my gaze drifts off to the left where the massive Kal faces the beautiful Alan.

Kal and Alan are gazing lovingly into each other's eyes. Kal's right hand lifts Alan's balls. Alan's dick lifts on its own. Rock hard, pointing skyward, it's a talking stick that says it all. Watching sends more blood to my own unshrivelling Shiva.

"Now tap that point," says Starflame. "Just tap tap tap to open the chakra."

My partner, Joe average, smiles. He must think my 45 degrees are his doing. That's OK.

I reach forward and touch his balls. I cup them in my right hand, gently pulling upward so I can get at his taint. With my left hand, I reach under that sad sack and tap tap tap. As I do, I think about the hardness between the two next to me. I hope he doesn't notice my deflected concentration.

"That was our last chakra. Now stand up and look around," says Starflame. "Just meditate, concentrate on your new open chakras."

I look around. Most of the guys are pointing skyward. It's like a mushroom farm. Kal, the giant, is in full glory. From the tip of his raisedness, a fine silver thread arcs down to his knees. A viscous shimmer in the soft light.

I'm about 75 degrees myself, but not juicin'. The shlub just doesn't do it for me.

"OK," says Starflame. "It's time to break for lunch. Take a half-hour. If you didn't bring lunch and need to go out, please put on your clothes first..."

"Oh yes," he continues, "try to remain silent while you're eating. If you converse, keep it on a high level so as not to break the mood of the workshop. We'll start again at one thirty."

Most of us dress, including me. I don't go out, though. I just sit inside and eat with the others.

I only brought a bagel with me. I'm hungry, but having suffered a bad stomach the night before, and considering my present condition, I don't want to risk it. This would be an embarrassing place for the trots... or even a loud fart.

Starflame speaks to me. "What kind of music do you play?" he asks.

"Er... Rock 'n'roll," I tell him. "I play rock'n'roll."

I'm pissed at myself for hiding my punkdom, a closet punk. But I fear, if I come out, they might suspect me of being insincere. Not a true New Ager. Not one of them. I'd lose the vibes.

"Oh that's nice," says Starflame. He doesn't say anything else.

The clock ticks off the minutes to the second part of the workshop. At a quarter after one, Starflame stands up. He motions to Gramps, who struggles to his feet and follows him onto the stage.

Together, they cover the stage with a bright yellow plastic tarp. They smooth it out. Then Gramps totters over to pick up his towel. He lays it out on the stage and lies down on it. Soon others follow. At one thirty, I walk over to take my place among the dozen naked men lying on towels on the floor.

As I step over the bodies, I'm suddenly struck by THE FAT MAN. His body is full of scars, like he's been in a horrible accident... torn open and sewn shut. A massive cesarean-like scar girds his belly like a belt. Another one on his chest, a large red Y, begins just above the navel and splits in two over each nipple. What a story there must be in those deep red blotches. This poor man. This battered body. Tears well up. I want to hold him. Kiss his brow. Tell him everything will be all right. I don't. I just walk over to my blanket and lie down on it.

"Before we start this phase," says Starflame, "I want to talk about performance anxiety. When you're young, you're worried you're going to come too fast. When you get older, you worry that you can't get hard, or maybe you can't come at all... But this is a different kind of performance anxiety."

I can't guess.

"We're here to try to preserve the feeling. To let the energy flow through the open chakras. To feel energy without releasing it into ejaculation... but it might happen." He picks up a roll of paper towels.

"We're prepared," he says. "If it happens, don't worry about it. It's not what we try to do, but it might do it itself. Wipe up. That's all. No anxiety. And oh yeah, please let me know if you're allergic to any kind of oil."

Starflame walks to the wall and dims the stage lights.

"Now I want you to lie on your towel," he continues. "Close your eyes, and I will come around and anoint each of you."

I close my eyes, then open them in a squint. All I can see is the ceiling. Fuck it, I'm want to see.

I bring my arm up to support my head. I watch Starflower take a squeeze bottle from a plastic bin filled with squeeze bottles. He walks over to the first person in the first row. That's Vinny, the attractive blonde.

He kneels next to Vinny's head. Then the sage squeezes something from the bottle onto his fingertips. He touches this to Vinny's forehead. Then another squeeze. This one goes to his throat

The heart chakra is next. Then the sex. Then a dab on the taint.

One by one, the naked Starflame oils our chakras to get them in gear for the next phase. I'm last to be oiled. I close my eyes and wait.

The oil is warm, soothing, and this grey-bearded guy touching me where Mom said not to allow... it feels better than I would have thought. Relaxing. I drift off to that trance state between waking and sleeping. Like every night when your mind goes blank. Your body begs to drift off, and your bedmate says, "Talk to me! Say something! Tell me how you feel!"

"Now that you're ready," says Starflame. "I want you all to stand up. I want you to rub your chakras. I want you to hold on to your sex and work it. Vary the strokes. Don't concentrate on ejaculation. Concentrate on your body. On the oil warming those chakra points."

As he speaks, our Guru jerks himself. One hand rubbing his body, the other furiously pumps himself. His speech takes on a breathiness, like phone sex.

"Rub yourself. Rub your chakras. Open your heart. Rotate your neck to open your throat, your mind. Moan. Wiggle your eyebrows."

He does all this. Jerking off with one hand, rubbing the

J CHURCH
Palestine

A new CD of all unreleased material recorded as a demo for an unreleased album from back in '97. Includes "Not Proud Of The USA", "State Of Things" and the "Underground trilogy. This CD is a benefit to help pay for the losses from the fire that destroyed most of the band and record label stuff.
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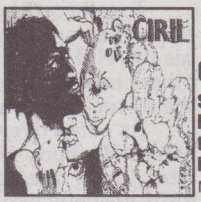

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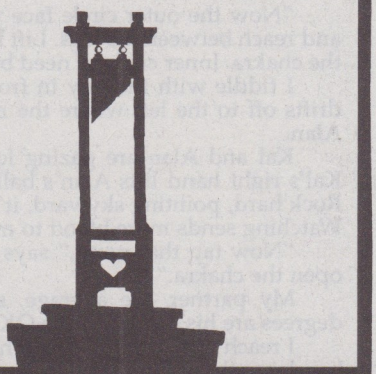

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other against his chest. Rolling his head like a drunk trying to sober up. Wiggling his eyebrows.

He removes his pumping hand and stands in front of us, thrusting his pelvis forward. His limpness flicks up and down like a lightswitch gone mad.

"There is a trick here," he says. "You have to tighten the perineum muscle. That's the one you use, like if you're peeing and you suddenly shut it off. You tighten it and hold. Then release. Tighten. Hold. Release. The Tantrics and the Hindus are very strict about this. They can tighten that muscle without tightening their anus."

I try. No luck. The two are connected. Dick flick, asshole tight. I can't separate the two.

"I can't do it either," says the master. "So just tighten everything. We call that *the clench*. Instead of letting ejaculation be your goal, you'll let this tightening be the goal. We're going to masturbate, but not to ejaculation."

He moves toward the cassette player.

"I'm going to play this piece of music. It lasts for about 15 minutes. I want you to masturbate to it. When it finishes, I want you to go into the clench. Don't worry, I'll give you sufficient warning. You can lie down, sit or stand up. Whichever you feel more comfortable."

Some kind of classical music plays in the background. At first it's soft, quiet. Nothing you'd notice.

I start by lying on the floor. Eyes closed, I feel myself absorbed by the music. I start to self stroke. One hand doing the work, the other, on my neck chakra, the other deep between my... Huh? The other? I open my eyes to see that John has turned his ship from the sea of self-discovery to enter my waters. His hands cup my balls. He's joined my hand and now wraps his fist around my rudder. He seems to be encouraging me to sail into a stream of flotsam and jetsam.

I'm having none of it. I brush his hand off, leaving my hardness for a fraction of a second. In that fraction, John switches and grabs it directly. Hand against skin. Steering the rudder dangerously toward the reef of ejaculation, he pounds up and down, spoiling the moment.

I stand up, close my eyes, batten down my own hatches, and get back to the open sea.

Here I am, standing, jerking off among twelve other guys, 5 standing, 4 laying on their backs, and three more sitting, cross-legged on the floor. There's only two of these guys who pass muster, but I'm not thinking about them. I'm not really thinking about anything. I'm just smelling the smell of the dripping oil as it drips down my body.

"It's your right to be erotic," comes Starflame's voice from the void. "Celebrate that right. You deserve it. It's your body and you should enjoy it."

I'm feeling my one pumping hand, and the other hand, rubbing furiously on my heart chakra as I simultaneously wiggle my eyebrows to stimulate my third eye. This is the weirdest, scene outside of John Ashcroft's office. A bunch of guys jerking off to nothing but classical music. That music has intensified and is rising to a crescendo.

A wave passes through my body. A full-body orgasm. It shakes me to my root chakra... but I don't spew. Not a drop. Before I'm aware of it, I'm hit by another wave, then another. I think I'm going to faint.

"Okay," says Starflame, "two minutes."

I go faster, not trying to get anywhere, but wanting to experience my own rising tide. Cymbals crash. Angelic voices surround us like sylphs, come to carry us away.

"Four, three, two, one!" says Starflame. "Now clench!"

I tighten my lower muscles. The music stops. A strange calm comes over me, like being suddenly covered in a soft blanket.

"Now," says Starflame, "I want you to do what we did at the beginning. Use a free touch. Touch everyone, but don't stop movement. Join with each other."

Suddenly, I'm not me. I'm us. I don't even care if it's one of the gods or THE FAT MAN. In fact, I seek out THE FAT MAN, wanting to run my hands over his scars. To trace them. To show him, they're just as beautiful as a Brazilian penis.

This ends after some minutes. Now, we're all in a circle.

"Now, as a final word," says Starflame, "before we get dressed. Sometimes when people open their chakras, things happen..."

ENDNOTES: [*Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers (email to: god@mykelboard.com) will receive a few extra endnotes. There are just too many to keep up with.*]

-->I got the *Prison Literature Project Benefit* CD from Versus Press. It's a good one, with lots of prison songs, including your favorites Chumbawamba and Propagandhi. There's some spoken word on it too, Chomsky and Ward Churchill. You can get info at versuspress.com. It's a benefit for PLP who send books to prisoners all over the US.

Yeah, this label is the one who was gonna publish my book. They backed out without telling me! No hard feelings, but it wouldn't hurt to ask 'em why.

-->*Stiff thanks dept:* I got a tape of BLACK SYFALLIS from Tero Lehto in Lahti Finland. (Home of the world's greatest pirakas, by the way.) With songs like *Gothic Transvestite* and *Women's Place*, you know it's right up my alley. It can be up yours too. Write to: *Thank You for Farting in My Sauna Recordings*, Ala Tonttilank, 7A 38, 15170 Lahti, Finland

-->*10 points dept: Censorship News* (no, it's not 4 sheets of blank paper), reports that Toni Smith, a Manhattanville College basketball player, turned her back to the flag during the national anthem. The college administration, says "so what?" Officially, they "support her right to protest." Sounds like a school with no alumni.

OK, I want everyone to go back in time to about 1984-85. As I've discussed in this space before, I feel that 1984 was about the high point for hardcore and this form of music was partially destroyed by its own success in a very short time. As others have pointed out, hardcore was one of the very few artistic movements whose originators turned against it before it had run its course. With very few exceptions, the great hardcore bands of the early 80s broke up, or went metal or college rock. But this is ground we have covered before. I'd like to look at this mid-80s period from a different perspective. A record label and capital perspective. In the US, the labels that rose and benefited most from the early days of hardcore were Alternative Tentacles, SST, and Dischord. You could add to that list Touch and Go, and many others, but let's stick to the above three for now. Consider that like most early hardcore labels, these labels were formed out of necessity. No one at existing labels was interested in hardcore. Add to that the strong DIY ethic that grew with hardcore. It is also a given that these labels started from the ground up, with little in the way of capital or experience.

In this regard, SST, AT, and Dischord are old-fashioned American success stories. Small groups of young entrepreneurs saw an emerging market and created products to fill that market. They had the right bands at the right time for the right price. The labels grew, distribution expanded, and by the mid 80s, hardcore bands like Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, and Minor Threat were known from coast to coast and around the world. These labels all found themselves in a pretty good situation. They had some of the top bands, and had built up an excellent distribution network, mostly while sticking to their DIY/independent principals. Which brings me to this. Thousands, indeed, tens of thousands of punk/hardcore kids made these labels what they were. These labels grew with hardcore into pretty large indie labels. What they did with it, however, was weak as fuck. The huge windfall netted by the early hardcore labels was quickly squandered when those labels' founders turned away from hardcore into more arty bands. Tens of thousands of dollars gained from Black Flag sales went to press up schlock like DC3, SWA, and Tom Troccolis Dog. To this day, SST and Dischord have not released a current hardcore record, and AT, though much more respectable in its output, must be sitting on thousands of unsold copies of Alice Donut and Jungle Studs LPs. Dischord has a great reputation for being honest and fair, but I'll be god damned if they have put out a good record since the days of Beefeater and Rites of Spring. And SST, what's up with those guys? Why aren't hardcore classics like the East LA Stains and Overkill re-pressed? Overkill's four-song 7" buries

everything SST did after Bl'ast.

What I'm getting at is this. The *kids* made those labels what they were, and then they walked away from the kids. The kids didn't give a fuck about grown-up arty music like Saccharine Trust or the Meat Puppets. They wanted to hear hardcore punk rock. Buying records on those labels was like buying stock or taking out a loan. The kids expected that their support would be repaid with more rad hardcore. Instead, a whole new generation of labels had to start DIY hardcore up all over again a few years later and begin the slow climb of building a distribution network from scratch. Not that this was entirely a bad thing, as the new DIY movement that started in the early 90s has brought us this far without dying out or falling victim to the whims of passing fads.

I wonder to this day how much of those labels' sales and income are based on sales of the essential back catalog. I haven't heard of a new band on SST in many years. What this proves is something I've long known. Hardcore is at the center. It is the most raw and intense form of underground music. Its sound and message are enduring and stand the test of time so much better than many of the other forms of music which preceded and followed it. Hardcore from 20 years ago is still relevant to kids who weren't born yet when it was made. Other sub-genres and splinter groups from hardcore have run their course and died out quite quickly, but the core at the center has prevailed to this day.

Hardcore was not daunted by its founders turning against it. Indeed, as I have noted before, the suburban kids like myself who flooded into the hardcore scene in the mid 80s and ruined it for all the first wave visionaries are still keeping the movement alive today. It was left to the next generation of kids to relearn all the hard lessons and not to be sucked into the same traps that the pioneers were.

OK, one last item. Back in the day there was talk of the Boston Disease or the Boston Curse. This was basically good hardcore bands succumbing to a desire to play hard rock or metal. I, for one, come from the scene that spawned *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*. I am fond of metal and hard rock, although I am quite tepid about mixing either with hardcore. I will go right out on a limb and state that I listen to *How We Rock* more than *Kids Will Have their Say*, although I think *Get It Away* is the best by far. At present quite a few bands are starting to mix hard rock riffage into hardcore. Most notably: RNR, Suicide File, No Time Left, and Tear It Up. So far these bands are doing it with style, finesse, and power, and no one has veered so far of course as to produce a Break It Up. In fact, I find the hard rock influence in all those bands to be pretty boss, fresh, and original. If you haven't checked out those bands' latest releases, you should for sure pick them up. I fear, though, that as in many revolutionary art movements, the genius of the master will be lost on the pupil and in the future there will be some wave of third-rate bands trying to mix AC/DC with DS 13 and it will bomb, bringing discredit to any hardcore band that rocks out with the right amount of style. I would advance some words of advice: mixing hardcore with metal and hard rock is dangerous business. These are two volatile substances that if handled improperly could blow up in your face. Proceed with caution!

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I turn my back for a moment and days slip by. At least that means that the energy is flowing and the winter funk has truly passed by. Things have been moving fast, as they are apt to do in the spring. First there is a quickening, and then things just take off and fly and I've been riding that non-stop adrenaline wave while I can. As soon as I came back to Richmond from my Midwest jaunt, everything in Richmond seemed to fall into place. "Have patience with Richmond," Aaron has told me numerous times. And he was right, of course. It has worked out, and things have fallen into place. Suddenly I feel like I'm in the Richmond I once fell in love with. That lush semi-Southern town with kids on the move doing cool things and plants overgrowing in alleys surrounded by that great old architecture. A good burrito shop opened up, the good used bookstore is going strong, there have been lots of good shows, and for the first time since I've lived here, we're actually having spring—meaning it didn't go from cold to unbearably hot overnight. In fact, it's been downright nice and comfortable and pleasant, except for that Pacific Northwest style rain that has been hanging on hard and keeping us all in a state of open-mouthed disbelief. But my mood has risen above the weather this time, and even the grey days and dreary rain has not been getting me down.

Some of my favorite bands have passed through town. And I've managed to get out of town a few times for even more shows. That travel bug sets in and the road calls. Summer brings bands on the road en masse these days. And I've been thinking a lot about how much that has changed over the years. I mean think of a band like Nausea. They never toured the US. They toured the West Coast and they toured Europe. They played a few shows in the Northeast, outside of NYC. But for the most part, if you wanted to see them—you had to go to NYC. It's funny, because nowadays we almost think nothing of driving four, six, ten hours, or flying halfway across the country for a show or a fest. Ten years ago that just didn't happen. For one thing, there just wasn't as much of a network for traveling. And there definitely wasn't a network for touring punk bands like there is today. Scenes stuck to themselves much more back then, and people tended to stick closer to home, for the most part. When I was growing up in PA in the 80s, we would drive to Pittsburgh for shows all the time, and once or twice we went to Philly. But we never went to NYC. I guess a lot of it was probably due to not knowing anyone there, and therefore also not knowing about what would be going on there, or anywhere else, for that matter. These days, many of us tend to have friends spread out in many cities. Due to all the traveling and touring bands and back and forth rounds, we don't think that much of driving to the next town, or even the town after that, to see a show or to follow a band on a leg of a tour. Because we can. And now all you have to do is go on-line and get lists and dates and all the information you probably would ever need for anywhere at any time. I still think it's kinda scary and I kinda miss those letter-writing frenzies that we had to do in order to keep tabs. All of these connections are really the coolest thing about the punk scene and one of the things that I appreciate the most these days. We have built this incredible network of people and places and consequently the world has gotten smaller.

When I was in Milwaukee, I was talking with a friend about how we first met as zine-makers and pen pals, remembering old addresses and towns we'd lived in, the overlapping and crossing paths of common friends, and how things evolve and you sometimes forget where things grew from originally. And as I was talking about NYC and he was talking about Milwaukee, he told me about how much he regretting not ever coming out to NYC in the early 90s. I was like, "well, Scott, we just didn't do things like that then." And I got to thinking, and we got to talking—about bands that started touring and just how hard it was to set up shows and make those connections. There were some amazing bands that defined places, regions, and towns, that became associated with a place to the point where if you wanted to see them, you would have to go there. That is the same reason that in 1990 I was making live tapes of the bands that were playing in squatted lots on the Lower East Side and at ABC No Rio, because I loved these bands and they didn't have records out. If you wanted to hear them, you had to see them, and in order to see them you had to be there. Consequently there are lots of bands that never made it out of their towns, lots of bands who totally fucking ruled, who have been forgotten because they didn't record or tour. Has something been lost by the ease with which bands can self-release their records and set up a tour? Sometimes I wonder. I mean granted, there are bands that are recording and touring before they probably should. And there are bands that are touring without ever having played even one local show. And yet they can, and that is kind of a point in and of itself. If you want to do it, you can. I think it's awesome that we have linked our various punk communities together into a larger whole and that as a result we have this usually pretty connected and together, strong link.

But sometimes I really do wonder if in our own subculture we imitate the rest of the world in the homogenization of every-

thing. Like I said, once upon a time you had to go to a certain city to see a certain band, or experience a certain style of punk rock. Once upon a time there was a huge difference between the East Coast and West Coast, New York and San Francisco, little nowhere college town and bumfuck USA. These days, places are starting to look the same. You have the same chain stores on every strip in every city, you've got your Starbucks and Blockbusters and Kinkos and Targets, and the local culture is lost. So does it also compare that you've got your punk scenes that have become so transient and cross-pollinated and over-saturated that in many ways everywhere has become the same? You no longer have to go to this place to see that band, because not only will everything eventually come to you, but some part of the magic has been lost in the uniqueness of place? Well yes, I think that there is something to that. But I think that in general, things are so much better in the ways that they are connected these days. I think it's awesome that people in New York now know that Pittsburgh is a rad fucking city and that it's not Philadelphia. And I think it's awesome that people travel from place to place and that bands tour like crazy and that we don't think twice about driving six hours to another city for four hours of frantic punk rock euphoria and then driving straight back home again. Or that if we just show up in a strange city the chances are pretty good that we can figure out which end is up, and chances are even pretty good that you can get plugged into the local scene and meet the kids and all that. But we've almost slipped into a point where just because you see kids that look punk, it doesn't mean that they have anything to do with what you're into. There was a time when punks were punks and by nature of that, you had something in common. Us against the world, ya know. Nowadays, though the punks look like punks, so do the kids in the mall, and as a result the punks just might walk right by the punks without so much as a nod of the head, and that is a damn shame.

But I got that spring energy flowing and I've got bands to see and traveling to do and I'm trying to say what's up to all the punks and keep the momentum flowing at a caffeinated pace. In one week's time I saw local bands My War and The Set Up at the Membrane's last house show, and Stop It and I am the Drum at the University Pace center. The next night I saw Witch Hunt, those awesome NJ kids from ABC No Rio, and Direct Control from here in RVA. A few days later I got to see the mighty Kylesa who were the most phenomenal thing I've experienced since seeing Neurosis. "Holy fucking fuck" is what I had to say after seeing Kylesa. I mean, I have liked Kylesa since the first time I heard them. Loved Damad too. But Kylesa is one of those bands that get a thousand times better when you see them, because they just rock you till your chest throbs. Crestfallen and Municipal Waste played that one too and the Holy Chow was transformed like I've never seen it. They laid carpet down that said "Waste them All," there were punk kids going crazy, and it was awesome. I was proud of Richmond that night. I've been proud of Richmond a lot lately. Seth Tobocman passed through and did his slide show for his new book and it was awesome. There was a huge turnout and Seth is a great artist and speaker, and I was proud of Richmond that night to have hosted him well. Sangre De Los Puercos came through, with no show to play, and we just had a party instead and dragged out those old live tapes from NYC in the early 90s. Dead by Dawn, Guyana Punchline... there have been so many great bands coming through Richmond. It's been fun.

I went up to DC for Page 99's last show. Crestfallen, Circle Takes the Square, City of Caterpillar, Majority Rule, and Page 99 played at this cool community center around the corner from the Wilson Center. It was a gymnasium and the bands didn't really sound that great in that environment, but it was a great show and there were a ton of people there (that I didn't know) and true to form as I have come to expect, Page 99 blew the power on their second song. Fortunately it was sorted out with the best kind of punk rock duct tape and extension chord repair, they rocked the gym for a long time, and the die-hard friends and pals and fans lost their minds in a way that can only happen at a hometown farewell. So case in point, there is something to be said for local punk culture.

I drove up to Pittsburgh when I found out that Kylesa were playing with Aphasia, who is one of my newest favorite bands. I had a horrible drive with a struggling sick car, and the whole time all I could do was say, "Aphasia Aphasia...I must see Aphasia." Once again things were on my side, because I got to the Roboto space just as Aphasia were setting up. I was busting with excitement and got Jeremy prepped to experience an amazing band. Laura came along and said something jaw-dropping while Aphasia was playing, and I was just going, "yep, Aphasia, I told you." Chani is a punk rock goddess with a voice that can kill. They are the band that makes me want to move back to Pittsburgh, because they are the total embodiment of everything that Pittsburgh punk is. And getting to see Kylesa once again made me happier than words. Face Down in Shit played. The show came to a frantic conclusion with the local Pittsburgh IO playing their last show. Seeing this band was an experience and a half because they have the most amazing drummer I have ever seen. This last show in their hometown and in their rad venue—the kids were out of control and it was intense in that hometown kind of way. Pittsburgh is such a rad city. It always has been, and these days they've got such a cool scene. It is the only place I can think of where they do huge circle pits often and no one gets so much as a bump. It's all fun, adrenaline-happy punk energy and they even do human pyramids. So I'm going back in a few days for Aphasia's record release show that also has just about all the bands I know in Pittsburgh playing as well... Behind Enemy Lines, Caustic Christ, Crucial Unit, and even more.

And already I've got my August plans for a West Coast jaunt to Portland, the punk mecca, for the zine symposium, and then I'm heading down to the Bay Area to see my peeps and get my burrito, books, coffee, rad trees and plants fix, which will all be topped off by Strike Anywhere and From Ashes Rise at Gilman. The first time I ever went to Gilman was in January of 1990. I was on vacation visiting a friend in LA. Born Against was touring the West Coast. We hooked up with them at a couple shows in SoCal. (quite a surprise to run into people from home when you don't plan it that way, but then again, I flew to England on the same plane as Go! and we didn't plan that either). But back to SF…Naomi and I decided to go up for that Born Against show at Gilman, where we got immediately taken into good hands. And to this day, I think it's so cool that I got to see such a great show at Gilman, because it was so East Bay 1990 and it was so "NYC meets up with the East Bay." Born Against, Econochrist, and Blatz. It was so punk. Did Rorschach play, or was Charles just there? Well my brain gets fuzzy and I start to ramble and tell stories of the old days and that means it time to shut up and go to sleep—the sun is coming up after all. It's time to write new stories and keep our local scenes special. Long live the punk rock.

xoxo

Chris(tine)

c/o Slug & Lettuce, PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA 23261-6632

The Numbers Are Doubling in 2003

Ladies and gentlemen, fast positive hardcore is alive and well on this earth (I know a lot of you were worried). I was really impressed by the international hardcore compilation that I got in for review this month, so I thought I would go into more detail about the individual bands and their contacts (something that a review doesn't really give me the space to do). At the risk of sounding trite, it's gems like this that reaffirm my faith in the hardcore scene.

Take No Heroes is a 10-band compilation covering the last three years, and was co-released by several labels from around the globe. Like I stated in my review, this CD has no sleepers. It opens up with a band that I am already quite fond of, POINTING FINGER, from Portugal. POINTING FINGER plays fast youth crew very similar to BETTER THAN A THOUSAND. However, these songs were recorded a year or so before they released their great 7" on Commitment Records, so they have a much rougher sound, more akin to 7 SECONDS (a/c David Rosado, Rua Almirante Reis 5, 8700-363 Olhao, PORTUGAL, xpointingxfingerx@hotmail.com) Next up is RAZLOG ZA, from Croatia. Their fourth song has CHAIN OF STRENGTH written all over it. But instead of "True till Death," you get "Jedinstvo-Prijateljstvo-Snaga." This band is definitely one of the standouts (Goran Kvrgic, M. Krleze 29, 44320 Kutina, CROATIA, kvr-

gahckt@yahoo.com). Following RAZLOG ZA is NO VIOLENCE from Brazil. NO VIOLENCE has the most eclectic sound on the comp. Imagine a more MOUTHPIECE-influenced MONSTER X with the occasional blast beat. Sounds better than I am describing it (R. Baturite, 267-01530-030, São Paulo, BRAZIL, cospexfogo@uol.com.br).

Then we have FEUD from the Philippines. Damn, this band rules. Songs about homophobia, scene unity, and the straight edge. This is a great introduction to a great straight edge band (Michael Nuestro, 19 Sunday St. Addas Village 1, San Nicolas Bacoor Cavite 4102 PHILIPPINES, xstepforwardx@yahoo.com). After FEUD, we move on to POLAND where we meet up with ONLY WAY OUT. These Polish gentlemen definitely have the most modern, produced, youth crew sound out of all the bands. The band felt the need to put "x's" by each of their names in the liner notes, so I think you know what to expect. Great hardcore, however I could have done without the faux-Nike logo (Tomek, Potrzebna 33/6, 02-448 Warszawa, POLAND, xtomx@o2.pl). The sixth band on the comp, CRICKBAT, adds a melodic vocalist to the mix to set it apart. Hailing from Spain, this band wears their IGNITE influence not on their sleeves, but more like across their foreheads in big black magic marker. I haven't heard so much IGNITE worship since the Bay Area's MODEL AMERICAN (Alberto de las Heras, Urdibais 4 4°C, 48920 Portugalete, SPAIN, inmyheartempire@hotmail.com).

Representin' the U-S-of-A is the MUTINY, out of Colorado. Gruff vocals and a cover of JUDGE's "Fed Up." No complaining here (mutiny303@hotmail.com). After that is SINCERITY, from Germany—decent fast hardcore with sentimental lyrics. Not too original, but still not bad at all (sincerity@stillbelieve.de). Leaving Germany, we come to CITA ATTIEKSME, from Latvia. The recording is a little flat, but overall this is pretty good, fast hardcore (Janis Reinsons, PO Box 1155, Riga LV 1050, LATVIA, Janis_ca@one.lv). Last but not least is SECOND COMBAT, from Malaysia. Klang Valley Straight Edge Represent! As soon as the vocals kicked in I thought of the great (but short-lived) band GAZPACHO from Los Angeles. Both sound like they are/were in high school. Regardless, this band is a good conclusion to a great compilation. You've got the information, now start writing!

In Other Core News

Dischord will be releasing the first Minor Threat demo as a CD single on June 16. The eight songs included are "Minor Threat," "Stand Up," "Seeing Red," "Bottled Violence," "Small Man, Big Mouth," "Straight Edge," "Guilty of Being White," and "I Don't Want to Hear It." The Minor Threat live DVD will probably be completed by the fall.

In other Ian Mackaye news, I got to see him speak at the Women's Center in San Francisco's Mission district a few weeks ago. He had some pretty interesting stories to tell. He didn't come off as full of himself like a certain other DC punker who does the spoken word circuit. Maybe it was because he interacted with the crowd and let people ask him questions directly. Whatever your perspective is, you can't deny that $3 for a three-hour Q&A session from the man that brought you MINOR THREAT, EMBRACE, and FUGAZI is a pretty sweet deal.

There's a lot of movement in the Bridge Nine camp. Chris Wrenn is releasing three singles on July 29, the first being SICK OF IT ALL, who will put out three new songs, one of which will appear on their upcoming release on Fat Wreck Chords. GIVE UP THE GHOST's *Love American* 7" will also contain three new songs, one of which will appear on their new Equal Vision album. F-MINUS's *Sweating Blood* 7" will be the third single coming out on the Boston label. STAND AND FIGHT (CA) and MENTAL (MA) also both have new records being put out by Bridge Nine. Coincidentally, the singer of STAND AND FIGHT, Wrench, is working on the CD ROM enhancements for the much-anticipated Project X CD coming out on (yep, you guessed it) Bridge Nine.

In the "Not So" Core News

Toby from H20, Chad from NEW FOUND GLORY, Freddy and Hoya from MADBALL, and Mackie of CRO MAGS fame will be starting a new band. Should be very interesting. If by "interesting" you mean really, really shitty.

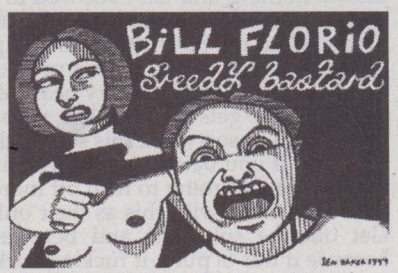
Greg Ginn of BLACK FLAG has confirmed that there will be a reunion show with original members. This will have already happened when this column is printed, so I hope it was worth your plane ticket!

Warning

Shameless Self-Promotion

OUR TURN (my band) recorded a demo a few weeks back at the Dutch Oven in Pleasanton, CA. If you read this column or my reviews regularly, then you probably know what you're in for musically. We wear our California hardcore influences on our sleeves, hence our name and the UNITY cover. Seven songs in just under ten minutes. If you're interested, send $3 for a cassette demo to the address at the end of this column.

My address has changed! You can now send your extra copy of the SSD Kids Will Have Their Say LP to: The Neck, 746 Baker Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 or email me at ih8thekids@hotmail.com.



For years that term has made me cringe. DIY, do-it-yourself. It's one of those corny fucking things that make you wanna punch people in the face—it's like an I-Told-You-So when they didn't ever tell you anything. The funny thing is, usually the people who use the term DIY have no fucking clue what they're talking about. Usually they can't even hold a real job. What the hell are you going to "do yourself" when you have no skills and you think some other loser who can't hold a job is going to teach you at some sort of workshop. I think I'd rather pop a porno in and "Do Myself" right. Sure, there are plenty of places where such workshops will inspire you and get you thinking and more productive, but punk rock really just takes common sense. You don't really need some guy who picks his toe jam all day to show you how to be punk. So the folks who actually can get things done don't like to say DIY because that just means it's fucking done crappy and half-assed. Oh, the cover of that zine is so DIY, because the chick used a crayon to color in the red panties she's wearing in the shitty photocopied photo on the cover. No, it's not cute; it's actually a waste of fucking time because no one wants to read the lame-ass zine anyhow.

OK. So I never have to talk about it again, let me explain why we all Do It Ourselves, so you understand exactly where I'm coming from here. Let's say you want to set up shows. You're actually gonna take initiative here and try to make something happen. Why do you want to do this? Because all of your favorite bands have some important message to spread and that's what punk rock is all about, social commentary. Bullshit. That's not the point, dufus—the point is that you're making it happen. It doesn't really matter what happens, it's the *how*, not the *why* that's important. I think this is the main thing that separates the real people from the cartoon characters. I mean, what's the point of me writing about George Bush? There are probably 10 people out of 10,000 *MRR* readers that think GWB is a decent human being. So what's the fucking point? The point is that there are 10,000 people reading this, they are into music, and anyone who is really genuinely into politics is not gonna look to a music magazine, let alone some three-chord song, to form some political idealism. If you do, you are a moron, plain and simple, you probably think LEFTOVER CRACK are talented musicians too, and you'll probably go to the fucking prom next year but I'll be all punk at the prom.

Well, I didn't go to the prom. That's the fucking point, my friend. I didn't have anything in common with the kids in my high school who thought the ANTHRAX rap song was what hardcore music was.

So, let's forget about DIY—and wash your fucking pants for once, they're gonna be standing up on their own soon. If you are actually a part of this whole music scene, you are participating. You don't have to be some social schmoozer, you don't have to take out Mike Thorn's trash, but you should leave some sort of mark. I mean, the sad thing is that the skinhead guy who beats up people for looking at his ugly monkey hairdo girlfriend probably makes more of an impact on your local scene than you do. He helps people form bonds because they all hate him, he gets the shows shut down because he starts fights, etc., etc... Now what do you do? Do you Do-it-Yourself now?

OK, now let's talk about *why* the punk scene sucks and why more people should *do* something about it.

Years ago there were a couple of big bands and a million small bands and several dozen medium-sized bands. Medium-sized bands like 7 Seconds would do a tour every year and draw pretty much a decent-sized crowd everywhere, and many local smaller bands would open for them. These smaller bands would eventually work their way up to medium size once they connected with enough people and got their stuff around. I'm just using them as an example—there were hundreds of bands that toured every year or so and people would come out to see. Why does this not work anymore? Let's list the reasons.

1. THE FESTIVAL TOUR. I'm happy to say I've never been to one, and everyone I know who isn't a high school kid who knows nothing and isn't allowed to ride a subway has had an awful time at these outdoor schmuckfests. Three stages, fifty bands. What the fuck is that? It's a rip-off for one, and secondly, it's destructive. When there's only one of these shows a year, you have fifty bands in crazy heavy direct competition with one another. Who gets second stage, who gets third stage, who has a nicer bus. I'm sorry, but this sort of thing is a complete waste of time and if you paid to get in, you are a sucker, plain and simple. Nothing is going to turn off more people to the punk scene than kids faced with this as their only means of seeing a show. Get out the solarcane and become an electro clash hipster because if this is punk it fucking sucks.

2. THE MAJOR LABEL PUNK LABEL. We know who they are… These labels started out as regular type labels putting out bands and supporting their scene, but now that they've reached some insane level of success, they turn from supporting it to eating their own. Every band conforms to the same sound, the same schtick and since they have the biggest distribution and sales, a lot of new kids who wanna be into punk get very bored because it's all the same and it's so boring. Since when does a record label not lose money!? When you only sign bands that have already scanned 50,000 bar codes at Borders, what really makes you different from Geffen or Sony? If some of these big labels actually took a chance on bands that were doing something new, it would be much harder to get jaded at 21.

3. Giving in to the bar business. These are dirty words to me. Cleanup slot—this is what I call the death slot, when you stick some poor loser band to play *after* the headlining band. This is something bars push for to keep people drinking longer; it does nothing to help your local scene. So, ya know what? Fuck it, don't ever watch the death slot band, they were morons for agreeing to it, and if the headlining made them go on last because they wanted to get laid or go cop, etc., fuck them, tell everyone about it. Gossip is a good tool.

4. Giving in to the bar business part II. Audition night. This is a scam that falls between pay to play and death slot. Some places who realize every band wants to play there, has an audition night where all the death slot bands come, they get their friends to show up, they don't get paid, and if they draw enough people, they get a death slot on a real show so their friends will drink at the bar when all the people who came to see the headliner have left.

5. "What band did you come here to see?" Why am I being asked this question? Because people are babies. "We drew 100 people and that other band doesn't deserve the same $50 as we got." If this isn't an obvious scene killer, what is? Why don't you just ask everyone who should we pay tonight? If any door person ever asks you, "Who did you come to see?" tell them you wanted to see AC/DC but this shitty show will have to do.

6. Pay to Play. This is probably rare in the punk scene except for moron mohawked bands from LA and Florida, but here's how it works—the club will book anyone and give you 100 tickets to sell to your friends. So if they cost $10, you keep a buck and give the money to the club when you show up at the gig with the unsold tickets. They use the money to pay a headlining band and all the losers bring their friends in and the club makes a killing. There's no excuse for this. This is something that glam metal bands deserve to be a part of. No punk kid should ever being playing or going to a show that involves Pay to Play. Bugout Society once signed up for one of these shows—we stood outside the club and sold tickets to the unknowing regulars who wanted to see TRIXTER, then we pocketed the cash and threw the unsold tickets away. We made 40 bucks not playing the show. We went to Bob's Big Boy and got a free dinner.

7. Retard DIY shows. Hey, four out of town touring bands that no one has ever heard of? Let's put 'em all on the same bill. Hey, a band that draws 200 people? Let's put em on with another local band that sounds exactly like them. Yeah it's not PC to call people a retard, but that's what you are. I'm sorry, I can't think of another name for you Corky! If you are putting on a show, make sure there's a reason people would want to show up. If you know people are going to show up, make sure you use this to help bands that these people should be exposed to.

8. Your bad attitude. Every band that gains some small amount of success thinks the world owes them. Just shut up. I hope you get the death slot someday and everyone tells the doorman they came to see some shitty band like BOY SETS FIRE instead of you.

9. Retard DIY people in general. The "DIY" folks all seem to have two things in common: naiveté and oversensitivity. The world is not here for you to pick at. Yes, if a band draws 100 scary members of a local graffiti crew, you may not want to book them and have them ruin your show. No, the band that has a song about beating up Ani DiFranco is not really going to cause a riot, other than a fucking laugh riot!

So that's my little outburst on why you all suck. Why don't you all get off your Do-It-Yourself asses for once and actually do something other than complain? That's my job! Hey, I just found out the new SHEMPS split 7" with TO HELL AND BACK on Gloom Records is exclusively distributed by Kent McClard! Man is he in for a fucking shock. Thank goodness we didn't stick a lyric sheet in there! Write me at bill@candids.com. I love you all.

This month's column was contributed by Aaron Probe. I'm sure other punkparents can relate to what he has to say like I did. And if you're not a parent, well, maybe you'll be treated to some effective birth control because it's all true; becoming a parent will change you and your chosen lifestyle in big ways. His contact info is at the bottom of the column.

By the way, I know it's been a long time coming, but the "how tos and what fors of touring with kids" column will be in next month's issue, I swear. So stay tuned. And as always, punkparents, get in touch.

yardwideyarns@hotmail.com OR PO Box 12839, Gainesville, FL 32604

P.S. #1 Aaron mentions below wanting to name his child, if a boy, Captain Dirk. Hmmm, is it a coincidence that the little brother (and one of my girl's best friends) of the 15-year-old girl I interviewed for issue #241 (June 2003) is named Captain Drake?

P.S. #3 That 15-year-old girl's name is Angelina Drake. Her email is angdrake@hotmail.com.

P.S. #2 An unrelated sidenote... this afternoon, my girl flipped open issue #241 to the exact page that has her picture in this column's heading and exclaimed, "That's me when I was a baby!" She then proceeded to flip through all the other column headers and ask me, "I met him before? What their name?" But for the "No" column, she giggled, "Oh, it's the ABCs," and for the more cartoonish headers, "Oh, cute. I draw that!" And not surprisingly, she quickly noticed Mykel's picture and asked, "Why he nudie kazoodie?"

***

For almost ten years I did a punk rock sex zine called *The Probe*. My entire life revolved around sex, the punk scene, and drinking. It was time well spent, and during those years, I never put a second's worth of thought into settling down and starting a family. This being the parenthood column, you may expect me to write about how the birth of my daughter, Lydia, magically changed my wanton ways, gave me something to live for, and how I've never been more happy, responsible, and well adjusted in my life. If only it were that easy.

I still long for the punk rock lifestyle. I miss getting drunk every other day and being able to go to shows on weeknights. I miss drinking coffee till sunrise so I can get work done on my zine. Wait; actually I don't miss that part. However, I do miss hittin' the road in the old Buick with a cold twelve-pack by my side. More than anything, I miss not giving a fuck.

Today, I'm too old for that other shit anyway. To me, 35 feels like what I thought I'd feel like when I hit 50. Trying to keep up the punk rock lifestyle now would be kind of sad. I know. I tried.

Basically, it took the right woman, and three years of transition, before I was fit for breeding. I'm not even sure how my wife, Keri, pulled it off, but one day I was barbecuing sausages on the driveway in my underwear, still sleeping on my couch, and the next thing I knew Saturday was spent buying a duvet that matched our curtains and grocery shopping at Costco.

So I didn't jump straight from punk rock into fatherhood; the decision to have a baby was a bit more scripted than that. Still, though I was prepared, I had no idea what I was getting into. When I was asked about becoming a "father," I completely skipped over the baby part. I wanted to name it Captain Dirk (I thought it would be a boy) and I told my wife we'd have to get a second TV because, "I'm not watching all those kid shows all the time."

Truthfully, I didn't put much thought into it at all. Ignorantly, I thought it was more important to Keri than it was to me. When Keri told me she thought I'd make a great father, I said, "Yeah, I know," because I knew I'd be there for her. I wasn't nervous at all. What I really didn't understand, though, was how powerful the effect of the baby would be on me. I never experienced such a high level of emotion over anything in my life. It changed me psychologically.

When I was a kid I used to have nightmares so terrifying that my parents would throw me in the shower to calm me down. As an adult I didn't have any fears. I never had another nightmare until I became a father. I think the idea that I was responsible for an infant that was so precious to me and yet so helpless worked on my subconscious. I had some horrific nightmares that haunted my thoughts for days. Basically, I never cared so deeply about anything so much in my life. The night our daughter had a fever of 103 was the closest to a panic that I've ever been.

Another aspect of becoming a father that I didn't expect is that taking care of a baby was much more difficult than I imagined. Before the birth, when we discussed the idea of me becoming a stay-at-home dad for three months, between the end of Keri's maternity leave and an opening in daycare, I didn't realize what I was getting into. I pictured myself working on my website as the baby happily lounged nearby in her playpen or took an afternoon nap.

I didn't know we would have a baby that doesn't believe in lounging and loathes the very thought of taking a nap. The amount of attention a baby requires can be grueling, especially when you have an active baby that only requires a light 20-minute nap to get her through the day. Of all the attention a baby requires from a parent, the first thing people always mention is "changing diapers!" However, that part is *nothing*; it's a small job that takes about a minute.

The hardest part about taking care of a baby is not changing, feeding, or cleaning. The hard part is that you can't take a break—not even for 30 seconds. You end up ignoring your own needs in the constant quest to keep your baby safe, happy, and occupied. I have never been more exhausted or stir crazy in my life as I was during the three months I was a stay-at-home father.

To my daughter, a playpen was nothing more than a cage she needed to escape from. She craved social interaction and was only interested in doing whatever I was doing, unless I tried to sit down and take a break. That would piss her off. My daughter's plaintive cries could cause dogs to howl within a half-mile radius. I ended up just carrying her around everywhere, even when I had nowhere to go. It was tough just finding time to use the bathroom, much less use the computer.

Being a parent is something I could not imagine doing alone. When I was a stay-at-home dad, my wife came home at lunch to breastfeed and was back home again by 4:40 pm. I counted the minutes. Unlike a lot of men, I was completely aware that my wife's maternity leave had been anything but "a vacation." However, once I did it myself, I understood what she had meant the night I came home from a second shift and she told me, "I don't even feel like a person anymore."

On the other hand, I've also witnessed babies that seem to spend half of the day snoozing and cry very softly. Two days ago (former) *MRR* shitworkers Tom and Stacy Hopkins brought their baby to a little party that was going on in the park. Their baby spent almost the entire time sleeping soundly in her stroller, and when she did wake up her cry was barely a whimper. Tom told me that was about as bad as it got. I just looked at him and said, "You gotta be kidding me!" I've also heard of babies who sleep 15 hours everyday.

Anyway, I don't want to sound like I'm complaining about my daughter. I love her and I think my stay-at-home dad time was valuable for both of us.

When Lydia was six months old, she started going to daycare and she has a great time there. She loves playing with the other kids. Whenever we drop in on her or come to pick her up, she's always happy. It's great because we were really anxious about leaving her with someone else, but she's obviously doing well.

Lydia is 13 months old now. Last week I spent three straight days home alone with her because our daycare provider had the flu. I'm happy to say that spending the day with her is a lot less taxing and even more rewarding than it used to be. She still demands constant attention. In fact, she'll do things like stand on top of her rocking horse with no hands or take the TV controller and dangle it over the dog's water bowl just to get a rise out of me. She thinks it's hilarious to make me jump out of my chair. It amazes me how much she understands.

The only thing I regret is that we didn't find out about teaching her sign language until she was a year old. It's tough for her to form words. Things like "ball" and "bird" sound like the same word. Sometimes she'll stand and talk to me using very expressive face and pointing gestures, but all I can say is, "I'm sorry Lydia. I wish I knew what you were trying to tell me." It took me a couple of tries before I learned that she likes to line up empty milk, juice, and water bottles and screw their lids on and off. The first few times she started pointing at them I thought she wanted a drink. She has always liked to go outside. These days she'll plead with me by slapping on the front door and holding up her shoes. The other day she found a key on the floor of a car she had never been in before. She immediately climbed on top of the front seat, leaned against the stirring wheel, and tried to stick the key into the ignition! I never even realized that she paid attention to how we start cars. Babies understand a lot more than we realize.

I'm not too concerned about her watching TV. She still prefers playing outside, but if a tape of the Wiggles will put a smile on her face when she's cranky then I'm all for it. TV is also how we got her to eat solid food. She used to take a couple of bites of something and then decide that food is more fun to throw and mash into clothes than it is to eat. However, I learned that if she watches a video then she won't have to play with her food for entertainment. She just sits and eats.

Lydia's favorite music right now seems to be '70s funk, but she also likes watching most rock bands on TV. I taped the White Stripes playing on *Conan O'Brien* for her because she seems to like watching them play. It's also a band that prominently features a female drummer. My roommate Craig has a soundproof studio in our garage with a drum set. I'm hoping Lydia learns to play it. At 13 months, her feet are still about two feet away from the foot pedals, but she likes to sit on the stool and bang on the snare, high-hat, and low tom. Craig has punk bands recording at our house about every other night so I hope she takes an interest in what's going on out there in the garage. Unfortunately it's way too loud inside for her to hang out with the bands while they play.

Anyway, as you can probably tell, if you see me out somewhere you may not want to ask me about my daughter unless you want your ear talked off.

Getting back to my original point with this column, let me just say that if you have a kid, your life will immediately become five times more complicated. Don't even tell me you have a dog. We have one, too, and there is no comparison whatsoever. My advice is that you make sure you are good and jaded with your own life before taking the plunge with another.

Thanks to a nearby Grandma and a very tolerant wife, I still manage to get wasted semi-regularly, play in a softball league, go to shows, and spend money on records, but all of those activities are just minor side notes to my new life as a father.

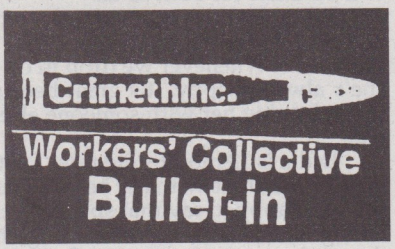
Don't bother asking me if there will be another issue of *The Probe*. It's so over. I barely have time to update my website once every month or so. On the other hand, Craig just added some MP3s, so check it out at www.proberecords.com.

The amazing REINA AVEJA CD and HICKEY tribute/live CD that I was supposed to put out ages ago are being released by another label. Go to www.suburbanjustice.com to check that

out. And if you order something from me, don't be surprised if you wait a month before I put it in the mail.

See you around!

aaron@proberecords.com



Hello, fellow longtime readers of MRR! This issue, as part of our ongoing series of drafts from our upcoming cookbook of recipes for seditious activity, we have a couple short ones for you. Apply liberally, with total disrespect for law and order and a deep reverence for nature and chaos.

RECIPE #1: How to Throw a Tofu Cream Pie

Step One

Choose a worthy target. Any pompous evildoer will do for a glouping. Al Decker, who mashed a luscious coconut cream pie on self-inflated economist Milton Friedman's face, said afterwards, "His generation is selling our future down the drain. They offer us pie in the sky, but being a down-to-earth guy, I brought that pie and gave it back to him."

Next, plan your pan.

You might plot to pie someone for months. Then again, you might spontaneously decide to pitch one morning after eating your favorite whipped yum and hearing about a potential victim's appearance. Reporters during live media events are becoming favored targets.

Dress the part.

It doesn't take an economist or computer hack to figure out that if you try to access a meeting of the pretentious and portentous dreadlocked, barefoot, and with pie-stains on your t-shirt, you may not be admitted. Shave, put on a suit (without necktie), wear an American flag pin, and keep your hair short. (You'll be able to go anywhere!) You can put your pie in a paper bag, wear it under your coat, carry it in a bowling ball bag, or place it in a container with a plastic lid and carry it in a non-descript, standard-size briefcase.

Don't forget to fortify yourself. Blend in with the crowd. Smile! Say hello to people and maintain a pleasant demeanor. If someone offers you a glass of nice red wine, do what Decker did and accept it graciously. It might help with the pre-pie-ing jitters.

The Meringue is the Message

The success of any splooging is a record of the act. It's good to have friends with cameras taking pictures, focusing on the target and from many angles. The impact is heightened if other media are there, particularly when the event is live coverage.

Launch

Some pie assassins work in teams. When L'Entarteur creamed Bill Gates in Paris, the operation involved 32 persons carrying twenty-five pies in roaming groups of three, many of whom were carrying tarts hidden in camera bags or under their coats, while they waited for the Microsoft chairman in the street. "The secret is to have precise information," Godin has said. "Our friends in Paris knew how the visit was planned and gave us all the details the day before."

Godin and his pastry partners try to confuse their intended victims, the police, and any bodyguards by appearing as ridiculous as possible. They paste exaggerated smiles on their faces, utter nonsense poetry, and chant "gloup, gloup, gloup" (an expression that derives from Godin's pseudonym Georges le Gloupier) before descending on their target with whip cream tarts.

When it comes to airborne pies, less isn't more. A crossfire has a higher success rate of splatting the intended target. For example, the Biotic Baking Brigade, with a dozen or more successful pie-ings, splatted San Francisco mayor Brown in a crossfire of cherry, tofu, and pumpkin pies.

Al Decker prefers to work alone. He says, "It's more heroic and romantic."

Pie-ing is poetic.

As you toss the creamy delight into the face of your prey, a quick quip can highlight your action. When Decker pied Freeman, he casually said to him, "Mr. Friedman, It's a good day to pie."

"It was nothing personal, just business," claims Decker.

After Pie

Expect shock and chaos. People will be aghast at what has just transpired and might react in many ways. People might scream, someone may throw something at you; enraged people will try to grab you. You might be detained and arrested.

Once you're reunited with colleagues, it's critical to celebrate. Drink a toast at the expense of the splooged. Have some pie!

Probation or Prison?

While pie-throwing is a mainstay of political theater, the pie-ed party may file charges against her or his assailant. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman was gooped by a PETA member who was charged with assault, which carries a recommended penalty of up to a year imprisonment. The three members of the Biotic Baking Brigade who hit Mayor Brown were arrested and charged with assault and battery. A jury found the trio not guilty of assault, but guilty of battery. The prosecution had recommended a term of three-years probation, which the threesome rejected, saying probation would prevent them from further protests. Instead, they were sentenced to six months in county jail. Prior to the Biotic Baking Brigade's trial last year, no pie-throwing case had gone to trial in America in 20 years.

Start Baking

Godin prefers tarts over letters. "I've always been a partisan of the insulting letter, in the Dadaist and surrealist tradition, sent by intellectuals to challenge famous people's pretensions," Godin has said. "But if I sent a letter to Bill Gates, only he would see it. Instead, I communicate via tarts, in a sort of visual Esperanto."

Practice

Set up a pie toss gallery to practice at home. Practice tossing and splooging pies at targets. Experiment with different weights of pies. Invite friends over for pie-toss parties.

RECIPE #1A: How to Prepare a Tofu Cream Pie

Karin's Incredible Chocolate Pie

1-1/4 lbs soft tofu

3/4 c. semisweet dairy-free chocolate chips, melted

Sliced kiwi, strawberries, or raspberries

1 9-inch unbaked Chocolate Cookie Crust, chilled (recipe follows)

1. In a blender, purée the tofu to a smooth paste.
2. Add the melted chocolate and blend thoroughly.
3. Pour into the piecrust and chill for at least two hours.
4. Garnish with the sliced fruit before serving.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Chocolate Cookie Crust

25 vegan chocolate sandwich cookies

1/3 c. margarine, melted

1. Break up the cookies by hand, then grind into crumbs in a blender or food processor.
2. Pour the crumbs into a mixing bowl, add the melted margarine, and stir.
3. Press the mixture into a 9-inch pie plate.
4. Refrigerate for 30 minutes before filling.

RECIPE #2: Built-In Auto Smokescreen

From: LITTLE-AARON <gummorabbits@yahoo.com>

Subject: auto-smoke-screen from texas

To: cookbook@crimethinc.com

My name is Watts and me and my brother made a smokescreen for a nissan stanza. It takes about fifteen minutes to complete and is good for evasion, a laugh, or plain pissing people off. Ingredients can be stolen or borrowed.

Ingredients:

* 7 feet of 1/4 inch insulated black tubing from a parts store
* 1/2 inch drill bit
* brass fitting with 1/2 inch threads and 1/4 inch male nozzle
* gallon of diesel fuel
* 1 small hose clamp
* a few small plastic zip ties (like the police use)

Instructions:

First you will need to disconnect the hose from your windshield wiper fluid reservoir and let the fluid drain. Then drill a 1/2 inch hole into your exhaust manifold near the front. Hammer the brass fitting into the hole and connect the 7-foot hose to the nozzle of the fitting. Then you will need to run the hose up

above the reservoir and zip tie it in a few places to keep it from snagging. This keeps gravity from pulling diesel through the hose as you sit at a traffic light next to a cop. Then run it back down to your reservoir and put the hose clamp on the end of the hose, slip it onto the reservoir nipple and tighten the hell out of it. Make sure the hose is not too long and trim any slack as needed with a knife. Clean up and add the diesel directly into the washer fluid reservoir and top it off. Then go for a ride and pull the fluid lever near the steering wheel and get ready for a 3-4-lane cloud of smoke. Best used at posh clubs, shopping malls, and business areas of town. For further information diesel fluid has a very high flash point, meaning you could put a match out in a barrel of the stuff. We have not found any bugs or problems yet but will inform as soon as we do. Hope you can use this. Enjoy.

For more information on state-smashing, free-living, and community-building, contact CrimethInc. Friendly Neighborhood Anarchists, at PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402 USA, or fry your brain in cyberspace at www.crimethinc.com.

The war of words today points up to what appears to be increased tension between Downing Street and the intelligence services over the political uses of intelligence. Intelligence officials were already embarrassed about an earlier report, "Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation," which was made public by Downing Street in February.

Presented as the work of the intelligence services, the 19-page report had in fact been cobbled together from other sources by junior aides at Downing Street. Long passages were copied almost verbatim—and sometimes exaggerated—from a paper written by a PhD student in California. (*New York Times*, 5/31/03, "Blair Denies Britain Distorted Reports on Iraqi Weapons.")

Whoever came up with all that future-Armageddon-government surveillance panic climate socio-fascist steez that popular literature and film has projected as the America of the 21st century were some seriously prescient motherfuckers. I mean, here we are, and they were totally fucking spot-on! You know what I'm talking about? Like the digital everything, white-walled cable knit turtleneck *future* of late 80s credit card commercials? Like the Big Brother climate-of-fear-Dead Kennedys-secret torture camp in the warehouse district future? Like the one government-one god-one newspaper future of freakout socialist propaganda?

My downstairs neighbor is a formerly cryogenically frozen caveperson who routinely marvels at the fantastic technologies that we of the fiber optic post-predator age take for granted, so when he expresses shock over the current state of affairs it's just kinda like his thing; but dude, it's like we're totally living in some Kafka automated grocery store with Cronenberg-esque biomechanical eyes nestled between the grapefruits reporting what we buy back to some ultra expansive government database. Maybe if you live in a small town with one hardware store and no ATM you don't really notice yet how everything is coated in Teflon, but really it's only a matter of time.

Do you ever think about when the city workers install the cameras into traffic lights? Like do they do it at night and try to be sneaky, or do they close down intersections and make a big production of it with cones and cop cars, all the signs of legitimate civic maintenance? I know that right down the street from my house they had one of the traffic lights flashing yellow for a week; no explanation, no nothing. I'm assuming there's a camera in that one now. One of my friends just got arrested shoplifting at some grocery store in like Michigan or some shit, and when they played him the footage from the camera in the parking lot pointed at his car, he said it could like make out the time on his dashboard clock! Now that's some totally futuristic shit right there! Except it's not the future! It's *right now*!

Yeah, it's mind-blowing to think about Philip K. Dick and the guy who wrote *Buck Rogers* and all that, predicting hovercrafts and cloning and a faceless, autocratic corporate-governed nation-state subjecting the entire planet to its economic and social whims, but I can almost grasp where it came from. I mean, these people were fucking out of their minds. What's more crazy is that it took so long. If I had been around when all this shit started coming out, like in the 50s or whatever, I woulda been all like, "Yo, stop lollygaggin'! We've got inventions to…um...invent! Let's get to hovering! Right?"

I also think it's so crazy that writers of comic books such as *Martian Manhunter* predicted the existence of Arabs long before CNN. People in those comics had names like J'onn J'onzz, which sounds so close to like Farouk Ali-Haimoud, Abdel-Ilah Elmardoudi, and Karim Koubriti—the latter, the accused "sleeper" from Detroit who was finally acquitted after his arrest in the post 9/11 shitstorm. "Sleeper Cell." That's totally futuristic, man. You know what else is cool? "Criminal Tribunals." Not only does it sound like some secret Superman court, where it's all dark except for swinging lights and stuff, and Superman is in leg shackles, but it rhymes! That's the genius of George W. Bush, the current president.

Before being deported to Trinidad, Shanaz Mohammed (yet another crazy future name) was held in Brooklyn for eight months. This was on an immigration violation. Actually, every three out of four immigrants herded and detained after 9/11 were from New York or New Jersey. You know what that tells me? If you look closely, it's like the Dept. of Homeland Security *(future!!!)* was saying like "New." You know, like being, "check it out, this is the new way." It was a coded message! So fucking smart! Once again, the present is like the past's idea of the future, in all the craziest, excitingest ways.

From the Judge Dredd armor of our urban riot police to the electric fence they're building around Central America, the world is just a really exciting place to be right now. All through high school I thought I was gonna have to either be a teacher or a rock star or an astronaut, but they don't even have those things anymore, which is awesome because I can't hold down a job; now everyone is like either a secret mailman-cop, or a cyber-warrior, or a fireperson-hero, or a tempworker or in jail. The jail thing I'll admit scares me, but since I don't take the pot I'm not worried about it. I'm more worried about the tempworker thing, which if you ask me is just fucking anachronistic in the world. Who wants to type reports or whatever all day when there are so many bleak, dimly lit white hallways to walk slowly down, talking on a phone no bigger than a horsefly that's mounted in your skull, eating dried fruit chips while smelling all good and shit?

* Not the future: scientists have said that the present lasts about three seconds to the human brain, so I guess it is the future, but whatever.

So, I'm standing out in the beautiful and warm Arizona sun, enjoying the nice 113 degree weather in the month of May. I'd just moved here and was surprised it didn't feel as hot as everyone says it is. Then again, they say it's a "dry heat." Whatever. Anyway, suddenly some pick-up truck speeds by and some jock-looking jerk yells "Hey Madonna, ya sissy," at me. I guess it's the bleached blonde hair. Or the fact that it's still 1986 here. Then he throws a Pabst Blue Ribbon can at my head. I was offended, to say the least. It was a full beer! He should left the top unopened. Then suddenly I felt a rush of rage. One I hadn't felt since leaving those burning towers in my ex-neighborhood of lower Manhattan. Or when I was called a "sissy" way before that. But wait, I think I should back up a bit and explain.

OK, so some years back I am at home enjoying a night of staying in. On a Friday night. Something I rarely do. At all. Unless, of course, I have the flu, food poisoning, or have rented a really excellent movie that has the three B's. Boobs, blood, and more boobs. Anyway, somehow my pal Tracy convinces me to go to some party in the East Village where she promises me there will be lots of alcohol. I am kinda skeptical since Tracy is

really not all that punk, and actually likes Sonic Youth. But I agree to go anyway. I figure ya only live once, and ya might as well meet new people and try new things. But more importantly, ya never turn down free booze.

So I go to the party with Wendy, and it is sorta what I expected. It is in this building on Avenue B, on like the fifth floor, and there are all these yuppie type East Village wanna-be trendy motherfuckers hanging out in the apartment the party is in. And also in the hallway of the building. In fact, as I make my way toward the apartment to get some beer, someone tells me that "I don't wanna go in there." I ask him why, and he tells me that it is way too crowded. Great, I figure to myself, I'll never be able to get to the booze. I knew I should have stayed home and worked on getting them bananas in Donkey Kong Two, Diddy's Adventure, which by the way, fucking rules. Ya see, in this episode of Donkey Kong, the Kremlings have again stolen all the bananas on Donkey Kong Island, but to make things worse, they have actually kidnapped Donkey Kong as well. So, ya get to play as Diddy, Donkey's little pal, as well as Dixie, Diddy's little girlfriend. And lemme tell ya, she is one hot little monkey. She has these big lips, probably from collagen injections, and this nice little monkey ass. She also wears this cute little skirt and has her hair up in a ponytail. Anyway, she helps Diddy get the bananas and the special coins. See, there are these Kremling coins, which help ya get hints and stuff, and then there are the DK coins, which ya gotta collect so you can get to the secret world hidden deep within Donkey Kong Two, Diddy's Adventure. Anyway, I knew I shoulda stayed home and played Nintendo.

"Did ya just get here?" Tracy asks Wendy and me, as she walks up the hall. Wendy tells her that we did, and that the party seems too crowded to go inside. Tracy tells us that she will brave the crowd, along with her boyfriend, Jan, and get us a drink. Jan. Pronounced like "John," except replace the "J" with a "Y". Like in "Ya." Or "Ya-hoo!" What a name. Anyway, I tell them that is cool, and soon they return with drinks.

"How do you like the party?" asks Jan. I tell him that it is fine, but I'd rather be at home playing with my two monkeys. He tells me that I am just "too punk rock." When I ask him what he means, he tells me that I need to expand my horizons, or some shit like that. I just look at him. He is wearing a black knit cap, cab driver scarf, ya know, those checkered things, a big black winter jacket, a drab shirt, and drab jeans, and boots. Typical communist outfit. Oh yeah, and he has wire rimmed glasses, on top of everything else. So I tell Jan, pronounced like "John," expect with a "Y" instead of a "J", I like things the way they are, and who is he to speak. I tell him that every time I see him he is wearing the same outfit, and looks like every other commie that lives in New York. I tell him he shouldn't be at this party, but leading some parade somewhere protesting the rights of the underprivileged, but in all reality, actually just working with the Yippies to support the legalization of marijuana. He asks me what I am talking about and I tell him never mind. Ya see, here in New York, every time some great protest or parade is staged, it always turns into a "legalize weed" fest. I mean, that is not a bad idea, at all, but fuck. There are other more important things going on around, and these guys always seem to draw the attention back to themselves, and their issue. Marijuana. Fuck that. Oh, did I mention that Furious George has a single coming out on Maximumrocknroll Records?

Anyway, Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", and I continue to argue about things. We finally decide that I am just a punk rocker, and am never gonna change, and he is what he is. Whatever that is. I still say a commie. So we drink more and more and get a good buzz going. Then the conversation turns to art and I get kinda bored. I tell Wendy, Tracy, and Jan, pronounced like "John." except with a "Y" instead of a "J", that I am gonna take a walk up to the roof. I do.

On the roof I run into this girl who keeps calling me "Furious George." I figure she must have seen my band, and that I must have met her, but I can't really remember. Actually, lately, I can't really remember a lot. We, Furious George, played this show about a month ago, and I got so drunk I blacked out. I kinda remember waking up on the stage at the Continental, a local club here, covered in beer and dirt. Somehow I managed to get home, and the next day found all these pieces of paper with phone numbers and people's names and on them in my pockets. And I have no recollection of meeting anyone. Everyone tells me that we played a great show that night, and I even have a video of it. And we did play well. But I can't remember a damn thing. It's kinda neat.

Anyway, I get to talking to the girl who is calling me "Furious George," and ask her where I met her. She tells me she met me at Jan's party a couple of weeks ago. Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J". I tell her that I remember. I also tell her that I remember she published some magazine or something like that. She tells me that she is the editor of *Cigar Aficionado*. "Wow," I tell her. Then she goes on to tell me that I would really like the magazine, and could she send me one? I give her my address. And got the magazine two weeks later. It has Matt Dillion on the cover. With a cigar. It says, "Matt Dillon, a rebel with class". Right. I wonder if he told her, "Hey, I'm Matt Dillon," when he met her. But that's another story.

So I get tired of talking to the editor girl, and get sorta cold from being outside, and make my way back downstairs, and back to the party. Outside the door of the party I see Wendy, Tracy, and Jan, pronounced like "John." except with a "Y" instead of a "J". I tell them that I am bored, and can we please leave now. They tell me that I am a party pooper. I ask if that is like a stoop pooper, and they just look at me. Whatever. So I hang out in the hall a bit longer and listen to them talk about graphic design. And about some guy who designs for some magazine called *Raygun* or something. They are saying that he is at this party, and he is really important. I could give a shit. There is no more booze left, and it is time to go. Then the guy they are talking about comes out of the party, and Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", and Tracy are all over him like flies. They talk for a while, and finally the guy leaves. I then ask if that means we can go too, and they all say yes. Finally.

As we make our way out of the building, I tell Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", that who cares about graphic design and stuff, and that he needs to be more of a man. I tell him that he should dress differently and lose those glasses. He tells me that I have probably dressed the same for twenty years. I say, "Yeah, so what?" We argue some more, and he tells me that I have a hang-up about being "manly" and stuff. I explain to him that he should be more "manly," and then he wouldn't fight with his girlfriend, Tracy, so much. Tracy is a tough little thing. Cute. But kinda like a pitbull. And Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", just seems sorta wimpy. But I'm sure he could change that. And I was just kinda trying to help him. But he didn't wanna hear about it.

So we make our way up to Avenue A, and decide to go to this bar called "Psychomungo". Actually, I decide. It is a sort of punk rock/biker dive. It has a great jukebox with bands on it like the Candy Snatchers, Electric Frankenstein, and the Ramones, but more importantly, it has Nelsha. Nelsha is the bartender. She is this cute girl who worked at this studio where we recorded a demo, and I knew she'd give us free beer. And I was right. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

"Hey George." I hear some girls call my name as the four of us are walking on Avenue A toward that pitcher of free beer. I turn and look and see these punk girls with funny colored hair. There is Adina, with the blue hair, Steph, with the new blue-black look for her, Karin, with the bleach blonde look, and Gunvor, Karin's sister, with I think some red or pink in her hair. They all look very cute. And very punk. One of them is even carrying a lunch box. And they have all these patches all over their clothes. Of bands. Like "Vice Squad" and "Casualties" and "Dick Army". And I think three of them are wearing short little schoolgirl skirts. Wow.

So, anyway, we all decide to go to the bar together, and I hope like hell that Nelsha will give us all free beer. All eight of us.

We get into the place, and it is just how I remembered it. Exactly. Down to the Furious George sticker on the tap pump. The place hadn't changed at all. And it had been a whole day since I'd been there. Wow. Anyway, I introduce Nelsha to all my friends, and she says "hi" to everyone. Then she gives me a couple of pitchers of beer, for free, and I kinda tip her big time. She rules. So we all get down to some serious drinking. Me, Wendy, Tracy, Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", Adina, Steph, Karin, and her sister, Gunvor.

As we continue to drink more and more, Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", beings to speak

with Adina and Steph, and realizes that punks aren't as stupid as he thought. He actually begins to like them and is happy he is here hanging out with us. I tell him that you can't judge a book by it's cover. He tells me that goes both ways. I tell him, "right."

So I'm sitting at the bar, drinking a lot, and kinda talking to whoever is around. And behind me, I hear Karin and Gunvor and Wendy and Tracy talking to someone. I turn around and they are talking to some little guy with like curly hair and who is wearing like a sweat jacket and jeans. He is telling them that they are trendy little fucks who probably listen to Spacehog, and like alternative music. They laugh at him and insult him back. He tells them that they are stupid Generation Xers, and know nothing. Then he asks the girls what high school they go to, and tells them that he is surprised that any of them can think. Asshole. But I ignore him. It is bad for me to get into fights. Very bad. I should let these girls fend for themselves. And it seemed to me that they were doing a great job.

So I continue to drink more and more and hear this prick insulting the girls even more. I figure I shouldn't say anything, 'cause this guy is drunk, and is looking for a fight. And if I were to fight him, I'd probably kill him. And that'd suck. Then I'd have to go to jail and await trial. Then I'd be on trial for like killing some guy in a bar, and would probably be on like Court TV. I'd get to meet that Terry Moran fellow, and perhaps I'd even be on CNN with Greta VanSustren. That new show, *Burden of Proof*. They'd have this panel, and they would all decide if I was guilty or innocent, or even sane to stand trial. I know what would happen. Some bozo would find like an old Roach Motel album or something, and see some lyrics I wrote like "Now you're gonna die you bitch," and decide that I was guilty. Of course it would make *Hard Copy* that some punk killed some guy in some bar in New York's "notorious" Lower East Side, and there would be pictures of me and everything. Then I'd go to real court and of course they would convict me 'cause of songs that I wrote, that were a joke, and because I call myself "Furious George." Then I'd go to prison and go on death row, where I would study a lot in the prison library, and appeal like crazy. Of course, it would work up to a point, but finally I would get the chair. I'd be ready to ride the lightning, getting all strapped in and stuff, when the governor would call. I would think it was a reprieve, but actually, he'd just be calling to tell them to make it really painful for me 'cause I'm the guy who wrote that Roach Motel song, "Now You're Gonna Die." Then the guy would pull the switch, and that would be it.

Of course, then I'd get to the pearly gates, and Saint Peter would be there. He' d look down at me, then at his book. Then he'd pull out a copy of that Roach Motel record. Fuck it. I'm fucked.

So, I just listen to this guy go on and on. Then I get an idea. If I act gay, and try to pick him up, maybe he'll get turned off and leave the bar. So I get off my bar stool, and in my best Frankenfurter/Tim Curry voice, I say to the guy, "Hey, you have a nice ass." He looks at me, and then says, "Meet me in the bathroom in five minutes." Everyone laughs. I tell him that he doesn't have to be so crude, throw my head back and walk away.

No luck. The guy continues to pick on the girls, and they are becoming visibly upset. So, I walk over to the jukebox, put on a Candy Snatchers song, and walk back to the group. I hear the guy tell Tracy that she is like a mother hen, and ugly. So I say to the guy, again in my best Frankenfurter/Tim Curry voice, "Well, at least she's not balding and gnatty." Then I walk away. He follows.

"What's wrong with being balding, big nose?" says the guy to me two inches from my face. Uh oh. I think I hit a sore spot. "I think I touched on a nerve, huh?" I say to the balding and gnatty guy. "Yeah, big nose," he says to me. "Big nose?" I say. "Release Rodderick. Release Bwian" I say to him. He just stares at me. Obviously the guy has never seen a Monty Python movie. "Listen," I say, "why don't you just leave the girls alone".

"What, big nose? I can't hear you. Did you say something?" I tell him that I don't want to fight, that violence is bad, and let's just drop the whole thing. He says "fuck you" and hits me in the head. Hard. With a fist.

OK. I remain calm and don't hit him back, even though I begin to feel the flesh around my eye swell. I figure I better not fight, or I'm gonna kill this guy, then I'll get the chair. He hits me again. Harder. Right in my big nose. Blood starts to come out. Again, calmly, I tell the guy he doesn't want to do this, and to just walk away. With that he knees me in the balls, and hits me again in the face. Obviously he is doing this because he was angry about the girls abusing him, and had to fight someone. That someone being me. This time I kinda flip. I yell, "I'm gonna fucking kill you," and grab him. At this point, everyone in the bar hears what is going on, and Wendy sees that I am about to engage in Mortal Kombat with this jerk. I start to think of Liu Kang, or Shang Tsung, and how I'm gonna finish this guy. Rip his fucking head off. Pull his skeleton outta his body and wear it on my jacket like my pal Ryan does with his skeleton. I am about to swing and Wendy jumps in front of me. "No!," she yells, and won't let me fight the guy. I try to swing at him, but Wendy gets in my way. She tells me she won't let me fight, and that's that. My eye is swollen up, my nose is bloody, and I tell Wendy that I am gonna fucking kill this guy. But she won't let me, and I was not about to fight with Wendy. She'd kill me. So I back off, and keep yelling at the guy.

But then the fun starts. It turns out the guy has two friends with him, little MTV wanna-be jerks, and they jump in to fight Wendy who is trying to protect me. Then Karin and Gunvor jump in to stop them, as well as Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", and Tracy.

So all I see in the dark bar are fists and stools and bottles flying. And lots of noise. It is an out and out bar brawl, and the whole time, Wendy is holding me back from getting involved. I look over and see Karin and Gunvor kicking and beating the shit out of the MTV guys with their lunch boxes and boots. The whole time their little ponytails are flying around, and they look so cute in their little girl skirts. Then I look over and see something else. Amazing. Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", and Tracy are beating the shit outta some guys as well. Fucking Jan. Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J". Wow. Jan is pounding on this guy, and his fists are getting all bloody. And still he keeps hitting the guy. I hear someone yell to the guys to leave, and I hear one of them cry, "I'm trying, I'm trying." Then Karin raises her fist in the air with a clump of hair. She fucking scalped one of the guys.

Meanwhile, I'm just standing there watching. At this point, I have given up trying to convince Wendy to let me jump in, and was just watching the amazing show through the one eye I still had open. Finally, it kinda winded down, with the guys being thrown out of the bar, and the little balding and gnatty guy yelling that he'd find me and kill me. Take a number.

So we are all standing around the bar and Nelsha turns on the lights and tells everyone to leave. I get a good look at everyone, and I see that everyone, meaning all my friends, got involved in the fight and kicked some ass. Even Adina and Steph. I look over at Jan, pronounced like "John," except with a "Y" instead of a "J", and see that his glasses are broken. I tell him that I can't believe that he actually fought, and he tells me he doesn't like people fucking with his friends. And I'm his friend. I tell him that he was right, that I can't judge a book by it's cover, and am truly touched. He is manly. Even if he dresses like a commie.

Then the conversation turns to how everyone kicked ass, and I feel kinda left out. But I also feel a deep sense of friendship, and of being loved. My friends are the fucking best. Tracy tells everyone that no one is gonna fuck with her Jan, or her friends George and Wendy. Karin and Gunvor express the same sentiment. I almost cry.

"You a loozer," says some girl with a heavy German accent. I look over and see some girl at the other end of the bar. She has short blondish hair and looks really tough. "You a loozer," she repeats. I ask her if she is talking to me as I cover my eye and nose with wet napkins I got from Nelsha.

"Yes, loozer," she says, "I am talking to you." I ask her why she is calling me a "loozer" with a "z". I also tell her to speak better English. She tells me that I am a "loozer" and a "sissy" because I let five girls fight for me. That she has never seen one man protected by five girls. I explain that these are my friends, and has she ever heard of friends? She continues to call me a "sissy" and "loozer," saying that in her country, I'd be beaten for not being a man. That I should be ashamed. That how could I walk around being such a sissy. Karin, Gunvor, Wendy, Adina, Steph, Tracy, and even Jan try to yell at her, but I tell them to let her talk.

So she goes on for like three minutes calling me a "sissy," and trying to start a fight, but finally gets bored and leaves. By this point, Nelsha is getting really pissed and asks us all to leave.

She says she doesn't need another fight, and I don't blame her.

As we put our jackets back on, the "loozer" girl comes walking back in. Karin and Gunvor explain that her name is Doritos or something, and that she is the head of some squat. No wonder she smelled. Anyway, Doritos tries to start a fight again with Karin and Gunvor, but they don't bite. She goes on about them protecting a man, and how stupid that is. They explain that they would protect a woman too, that they protect their friends. Doritos doesn't get it. "But he is a sissy," she exclaims. Finally she leaves again, and then we do as well. What a fucking night. I learned a lot about friendship.

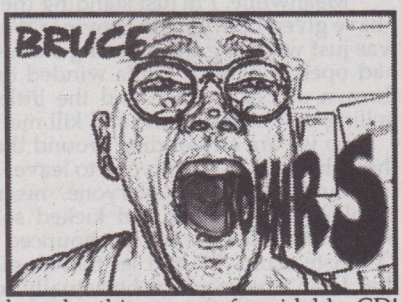
So there I am standing by the side of the road having been called a sissy by some putz in a pick-up truck. So what do I do? Live with it. It is too hot and I'm too old for this shit. Actually, I just haven't made enough female friends out here. Yet.

Take my Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. Rocket From The Tombs have a new CD out of all their old stuff. If you didn't know, this *was* the original Dead Boys. It even has Cheetah singing "Sonic Reducer." This is by far one of the most important collection of unreleased stuff ever to grace our stereos. I *urge* you to get this, to understand the history of punk. Plus, you'll give Cheetah some money—and if it wasn't for him, trust me, none of us would be where we find ourselves now. Um, I don't know if that's good or bad?
2. Joey Ramone had his 52nd birthday party in New York—even though he's dead—a couple of weeks back and I missed it due to moving. I was supposed to co-host—so sorry to anyone who might have been looking for me there. The money that came in is used to fight cancer, so Joey's mom and brother rule for throwing the thing!
3. There's a "punk" radio station where I am in Arizona. They play all this stuff by Good Charlotte, Papa Roach, and whatever else is in. Today. Then they say it's time for some classic punk and play Rancid, NOFX, and Green Day. I love this place.
4. www.georgetabb.com

Skinhead Rock



Rebellion Records from Holland has some tough-as-steel-capped-boots skinhead music for you fucks this month!

Let's start the brawl with RAZORBLADE and their raw and brutalizing CD *Spreading Fear*. The deep growl of the vocals combined with twin guitar, bass, and drum attack make this a very formidable CD! RAZORBLADE sings in English. This CD bristles with Oi! fervor. RAZORBLADE stomps their way through "Cold Stares," "Skinhead Rock," "Spreading Fear," "Made in Holland," "Parasite," "Badland Skins," and "The Dying Breed." Fucking first-rate shit here!! This skinhead music will make you pay close attention, tap your boot on the bar-rail and throw your fist in the air!

The second fine skinhead product from Rebellion Records this month is the melodic CD *False Gestures*, by BADLANDS. This superbly crafted folk/pub rock CD is laced with acoustic guitars and refined singing that favor the BELTONES or THOSE UNKNOWN during their quieter moments. BADLANDS take the high road lyrically. The songs are packed with deep ideals. You get "Give Me Strength," "Nice Day for a Hanging," "Leave It Behind," "Hey My Friend," and a thought-provoking song called "Right to Judge." Read these lyrics: "Pay resistance in return they'll make sure you're prison bound / Take a listen government, I can see through you / I've got the right to judge you because of the things that you do / Declare war on the media, what happened to free speech / They won't fool me with stupid lies, out of ignorance they preach / looking down on the common man / The cries who nail me to the cross are the ones that I condemn."

Good stuff! For RAZORBLADE and BADLANDS merchandise, write to Rebellion Records, De Engstoep 57 - 5246 BD Rosmalen, The Netherlands. Contact them at rebelproducts@hotmail.com or check them out at www.rebellionrecords.nl.

CHEAPSKATES played a rowdy set to open the latest HAMMERLOCK show at the B.P. Psychos compound. These full-tilt rock 'n' roll motherfuckers raged through a set of blustery rock anthems at break-neck speed. CHEAPSKATES have a new compilation CD available on Pumpkinhead Records. The *Going to Hell* CD contains the 1997 demo, *I Wanna Drink*; the 1998 demo, *Skate to My Grave*; the 1999 demo, *Going to Hell*, with the classic tune "I'll Grab the Guns, You Grab the Beer," The 1999 demo, *Hands in My Pants*; the 2000 demo, *Hit n' Run Everyone*; and 2001 demo, *Cheat to Win*. This is good straight-ahead skate rock with some similarities to the BLURTERS (Australia), HIT BY A SEMI, and DRI. There are some great vocals that remind one occasionally of DEMENTED-ARE-GO! (that's high praise!) All the songs are lightening fast and punk-as-fuck! Contact CHEAPSKATES at www.goingtohellvideo.com. Maybe they'll play your party too!

AGNOSTIC FRONT (USA) and DISCIPLINE (Netherlands) have a great double live record out for you punks and skins! Both bands run through a good cross-section of their repertoire. Here are partial set lists. AGNOSTIC FRONT: "Believe," "Victim in Pain," "Last Warning," "Before My Eyes," "United Blood," "Police State," "Bullet on Mott St.," and "Crucified." DISCIPLINE: "Young & Reckless," "Our Pride," "Rejects of Society," "Nice Boys Finish Last," "Hooligans Heaven," "Fuck You Anyway," "Saturday Night Riot," "These Streets," and "Frontline Skins."

After two decades on the road, AGNOSTIC FRONT is the most influential old-school hardcore band still performing and are getting the respect they deserve. DISCIPLINE is finally getting more recognition in the US—they have been quite popular in Europe for years! Write to Knockout for this package at mosh@knock-out.de (I Scream Records, Belgium).

HUMAN WASTE, from Froson, Sweden has an absolutely brutal EP prepared for you! The new record is called *I Vantan Pa Socialbidraget* and this is some heavy duty grinding fast punk rock with screamed vocals and pummeling drums. The guitar and bass lace the whole thing together. The lyrics deal with intelligent subjects like the long term perils of drug and alcohol abuse, the "sadness, melancholy and cynicism of a cold and frightening new world," and how easily one can become an outcast from society (one "drastic turn and a stable existence with family home and income turns to hell"). This record is really fucking good! Write to HUMAN WASTE/New Noise, Box 55, 832 21 Froson, Sweden; www.newnoiserec.cjb.net.

TO HELL AND BACK, from Albany, New York, have an excellent new punk rock 45 rpm 7" out on Coalition Records, the Netherlands. The new single starts out with a bullet on "Messed Up"—"I don't know who is right, but I've gotta fight..Just keep feeding me more bombs...Just keep me stocked with prosthetic arms..." You get great guitars, tough vocals, brute strength! Flip this over and you get another killer song, "American Taliban" The full-throated vocals and incendiary guitar leads push this one over the top! Write To Hell and Back, c/o Jim MacNaughton, PO Box 2263/Esp Stn., Albany, NY 12220, tohellandbak@capital.net or Coalition Records at www.coalition-records.com.

Partners in Crime Records has another winner with GOUKA and their *Chaos* EP. These Japanese headbanger punks scream their way through "Sense of Superiority," "Up in Smoke," "Pleasure," "Coexist," and "Six." The guitars blister, and the vocals are absolutely bloodcurdling! Write to Partners in Crime, 6250 NE 6th Ave., Portland, OR 97211 or email GOUKA at hati@msf.biglobe.ne.jp.

LOUSY has a rough and ready new CD for you on Knockout Records. This CD is called *The Babylon District* and the deep gruff vocals remind one of Philadelphia's great skinhead band, SONS OF LIBERTY. On the new CD, LOUSY starts off with "Lousy Forever—Forever Lousy" and plows through eleven more guttural punk masterpieces. You get songs like: "Fight with Me," "One of the Ugly," "Homefront," "Where's the Cash?" and "Words of Honour." "Words of Honor" has particularly important words to share with you punks! Read these lyrics: "Take care with your words, think once more / Take care with your promises, take care with them all / Words like these are easy to say / But to keep them is hard/ barefaced guy / Words of honour, words of shit / The best example is the fucking politics / Words of honour, words of lie / think twice before you promise a lot / See ya in the news, see ya on the spot / I give you my word of honour, but my vote; rather not." Yes!!

This is a consistently well-honed collection of songs from LOUSY—perhaps their best output to date! For LOUSY, *The Babylon District* CD, write to Knockout Records, Postfach 100716, 46527 Dinslaken, Germany, www.knock-out.de.

DISTURBANCE, from Rotterdam, Netherlands, started playing in the mid-90s and are now ready with a full-length record called *Malice in Slumberland*. These nasty punks sing gruff punk rock with a solid rhythm section churning behind the vocals. The band establishes an immediate punk rock urgency while maintaining a sense of humor. In "The World is a Pisshole and God Pulled the Chain," the DISTURBANCE sing, "The government looks at a big bowl full of hell / Money keeps it stinking with power at its right / The world is a pisshole and we're going down the drain." Very good! In "Sons of War," DISTURBANCE bemoans the futility of war. Read these applicable lyrics: "Are they worth anything and do they mean a lot / Moving 'cross the borders, begging to be shot / Will they make it through the night or will they die today / Will they survive or die without anything to say / Protecting our economy and dying for our family / And fighting a nameless foreign force / Protecting our economy and dying for our family." Included on the *Malice in Slumberland* CD is the "Live on to Decline" song that was DISTURBANCE's first single. Other songs include "Antidote for Anarchy," "No Enemy," "Fuck Politics," and "What About Us."

For the new DISTURBANCE CD, as well as lots of other Oi!/punk/hardcore product, write to Streetmusic Berlin, PSF 350 141, 10211, Berlin, Germany, or email ralf@streetmusic.de, or visit www.streetmusic.de. Contact DISTURBANCE at www.disturbance.nl.

French punks ATTENTAT SONORE have a really good 10" record out now called *Social Headache*. These punks thrash through "Bords de Vienne," "Mobile Assholes," "Social Headache," "Salt Lake Nazis," "Enchaine," "Boots and Braces," "Better Than Zero" and a PARTISANS cover, "No U-Turns." You get good trade-off female-male vocals, not unlike the great English band DEADLINE. Write to: Maloka, BP 536, Z1014 Dijon Cedex, France, or visit www.chez.com/maloka.

Jake and Duke brought the fucking TEMPLARS to San Francisco and Oakland for two excellent shows! Both shows were honored with performances by the ROUGHNECKS, Sacramento's favorite sons. This is skinhead music at its best! Check out this set list from the ROUGHNECKS: "Roughneck Noise," "No Justice," "Saturday," "Serve and Protect," "Summer of 96," "Short Haired RNR," "Outkast," "Skinhead Blues," "Midtown," "529," "Lost Paradise?" "Sactos Alright," and "Dirty River."

This band played their ass off and got the skins and punks emotionally charged up for the Gods of Thunder: the TEMPLARS! Carl, Phil, and Perry took the crowd of skins and punks on a fantastic skinhead musical journey! Read over the set list: "Skins and Punks," "I Believe in Myself," "These Four Walls," "The Templars," "My Revenge," "Glory It Once Was," "Politicians," "New York," "Coward," "You're Free," "Bovver Boy," "Never Fade Away," "You Decide," "Skinheads Rule OK," "Guardian Angel," "Victim," "Make Your Mark," "Breakdown," "Police Informer," "Video Age," "Freedom Has It's Price," "War on the Streets," "Night of the Seagulls," and "Gunrunner." Amazing!!

Solid support was supplied by PISSED ON ARRIVAL who came all the way from Salt Lake City to open these shows. A good time was had by all!

Ben (FEELERS) with Johnny, and Scott (BODIES) and John (RANDUMBS) have a strong punk rock quartet playing out of Sonoma, California called the MUGGERS. The new CD will be out shortly and it's packed with short, snotty punk rock blasts! Ben starts off the rock 'n' roll rollercoaster with "We're Gonna Make You"—excellent! Next up is one of the real crowd-pleasers that the MUGGERS delivered recently at the BODIES show—"Born on the Wrong Side"—this song rocks hard! The third song is "Put Your Gun Down" and the leads right into "American," the ripping title cut of the new CD! This fucker harnesses the manic energy that the STITCHES employ so well. Great song! Song five is "John Walker Lindh"—this is not flattering lyrical stuff! The next tune is "Boston" and this captures that admirable punk rock & roll spirit that the DUCKY BOYS used to trot out at shows The last song is "Harley Song" and it's another rocker! Keep your eyes peeled for MUGGERS product!

* Note to readers of this column: Disregard any counterfeit "Bruce Roehrs" comments found on internet sites. This magazine is the only forum where "Bruce Roehrs" banter is officially displayed.

Until next month—

See you at the bar.

1,800,000 and counting

A column by Prisoners.

As the time for my release draws nearer, I've discovered something I never would've thought I'd find. I'm terrified. I'm scared of being free! Well, that's just plain crazy! you say. And it may be. Nevertheless, the feelings of angst and anxiety are still there. But where does it come from?

I've spent by far the majority of the last sixteen years locked up. I haven't had more than six months free since April of 1987. Some would say that I'm institutionalized. I detest that term for its implications. I don't like being locked up. I *hate* it with a passion. I hate being told what to do and when to do it. I hate the people in here. Predators, sexual and otherwise, motherfuckers always trying to think they can get over on you to the point where you no longer trust anyone, the petty vindictiveness of "guards" who don't like my "attitude," the constant feeling of having to look over my shoulders and watch my back... No. I hate this shit, although I've learned to adapt very well and I've rarely had any significant problems.

I believe my fear is rooted in the fact that, assuming I'm released at my first outdate (2006), I'll be 34 years old. Every time I've been released in the past I stayed with my parents. Before I could get on my feet, I'd be back in jail, rehab, or prison. I don't blame anyone for this. I knew the rules. I broke them, and I got caught. But the system does not provide for a person's release, at least not in Michigan. A person is cast out into a world with virtually no support structure at all, except for some overworked parole officer who's only interest is getting you in and out of their office as quickly as possible. That is, until you fuck up.

They expect you to get a job. There was a time back in 1991 when I put in 40 job applications in two weeks. Not a single one called me back for a job. And these weren't some kind of exclusive jobs. Factory/shop work, gas station attendant, warehouse worker, just stupid shit that any lame with or without a GE could get. So what's left for a guy like me? Temp work. The great scab scourge of the unions. And what do these jobs pay? You're lucky if you can find one paying $8 an hour. That sure as hell ain't a living wage!

But I digress. Fear of freedom. No, not exactly fear of freedom. Fear of what then? Fear that I'll fail, I suppose. Fear that I won't "make it." Let's face it. Options are limited for me. Sure, I've gotten a few vocational skills in here. But not many. Vocational and educational programs have been drastically reduced, as the State needs more and more money to build and run prisons. The prison budget for Michigan last year was $1.6 billion! That sure doesn't 1eave much for programming. Nor for the schools or the poor.

In the current state of economic collapse that the capitalist system is undergoing, the prospects for someone just released from prison aren't good. The current trend of shipping once high-paying jobs to other countries and anti-union activities have made it hard for even an "honest" person. As corporations dramatically cut jobs, slash wages, and the unemployment rolls grow, we headed into an imperialist invasion of a land lead by a recalcitrant ex-CIA employee to ensure US dominance of the world oil market. And let's not forget the perpetual War on Terrorism. How brilliant! The Cold War depended on the Soviet Union to ensure perpetuation. But this new "war" only requires that the US keep doing what it's always done to ensure a "threat" for years to come. Isn't that a stroke of genius! Terrorism will always be a threat as long as we keep forcing our economic policies on foreign lands and indigenous peoples. But again, I digress...

But it's all part of my fear of being released. I don't foresee good times for the average worker anytime soon, so how can I see even survival for a guy like me? Getting "old" like I am (I'm

31), I find myself worrying about shit I never did before. Financial security in old age, health care coverage, that kind of shit. All products of a system I hate, but products that I grudgingly will have to accept because let's face it: a worldwide, or even nation-wide, Anarchist "society" will never happen. The best we can hope for is small enclaves that act in autonomous manners. And even that will be attacked and destroyed by the State if it proves too successful. Can't have a "Domino Effect" fouling up the capitalist agenda.

Many of you may be thinking: well, he just wants to sell out and give in to the System. Maybe so. Maybe I just want to get older than 50. Ain't too many Punks make it past 50, are there? I'd hate to think that my life is already half over. That's unacceptable. I want to be 70 and still going to punk shows and agitating underground! And that means shit like health coverage and financial security.

It's not gonna be easy. The ironic thing is that I have to hope for something I would hate to see. I have to hope that the capitalist system "rights" itself so that I can get a job that will pay well and give me the health coverage I need. That just really rubs me the wrong way. While I'll practice DIY lifestyle tactics, I'll still need money to do many things. So I have to compromise to do the things I'll need to do. But I assure you that I'll be a thorn in the side of all that I hate even as I participate in it. An agent provocateur. An undercover agent of destruction.

What has been the point of all of this aimless rambling? Fuck if I know!

Anyone who wants to write can reach me at: James Duane #214699, Macomb Correctional Facility, 34625 26 Mile Road, New Haven, MI 48048. Prisoner to prisoner correspondence is allowed. For those who are prisoners and can't write to other prisoners but want to reach me, write me at: 1228 Ronald, Madison Nts., MI 48071.

To all those "old school" punks: keep the torch lit and welcome the newcomers. To those who are still young in age: Don't ever stop believing. peace, love, anarchy, and solidarity.

"When there are too many police, there can be no liberty; When there are too many soldiers, there can be no peace; When there are too many lawyers, there can be no justice."
—Lin Yutang

We thought we would warn you: the time has come once again for *Maximum* to raise its cover price. The price will go up to four dollars starting with issue #244, September. The last time we pulled this stunt was in January of 1997, and you know, a lot of things have changed since then. As my friend Melissa pointed out, in regard to "personal" zines, "two dollars is the new one dollar." I must regretfully add that four dollars, at leat for a zine as fat as *MRR*, is the new three. I hope you know us well enough by now to know we would avoid it if we could.

We will be able to keep offering subscriptions at a lower rate than the newsstands, so keep that option in mind when adding up your punk rock budget for the year. Gilman membership card, two bucks. Studded belts have gone down, I've noticed, to a reasonable fifteen. Your *Maximumrocknroll* subscription will be, as of now, only thirty dollars for the year.

••••

I'm keeping this column short due to time and space, this month. It's not for lack of things to write about—there are plenty of those. But the sun is coming up, the coffee is sour, and little bits of paper are sticking to the gluestick on my fingers. Deadline saturation. Impending collapse.

Nights (mornings) like these remind me of my old days here at *Maximum*, and all the solitary late nights of layout. Until two years ago, we used to run each page of *MRR* through our waxer, flatten it down on a board with a roller, and trim the sides with an Xacto knife. You'll have to wait for a glossary, I'm afraid, if any of those terms are unfamiliar. Anyway, page after page after page, we waxed and rolled and trimmed.

MRR Trivia: because of our youthful enthusiasm (and the fact that we'd cut pages in the middle of the night), at least three *MRR* current or former coordinators bear an elliptical scar on the side of one index finger—the finger that presses the ruler down on the page as the other hand cuts.

One night back in the day, three *MRR* big shots, colleagues and friends of mine, all went out to get *MRR* tattoos. Come on, Arwen! they said. Come get your *MRR* tattoo! But I stayed home and cut pages, instead.

I'm the last of those four shitworkers still here, now. I would have gotten the tattoo with them—I just hadn't decided where to put it yet. Actually, I still haven't. But at least I have the little scar, for weary nights (mornings) like these. It was a mess; I remember it well. It took a lot of witeout to get my blood off of the pages.

••••

Congratulations to Gina, Rebecca, Mike, Fred, Butch, Daphne, and the entire Suigetsukan martial arts school, on their lovely new home. Holy shit—you built the whole thing yourselves! I'm very glad I made the grand opening, even though I was too late to see Gina cut a two-by-four in half with a sword.

Congratulations to Andy, A. Wonder, Ivy, Wonder Woman, Melissa, and the entire SF punk theater troupe for their phenomenal musical about historical San Francisco street wars! We were all so moved and impressed. Setting fire to a scale model of Civic Center, even!

Congratulations to Andrew, of (unblemished) former *MRR* coordinator fame, and Rainy for their new zine/punk art store, Needles and Pens. It's lovingly put together, like a "personal" zine. It's on 14th at Guerrero. They're nice people and I bet they take consignment.

Arwen, PO Box 170291, San Francisco, CA 94117
I haven't forgotten. Eventually I'll write you back.

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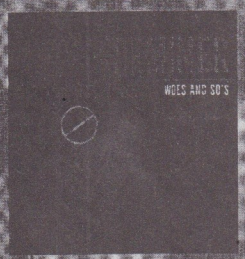

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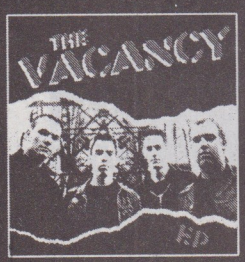

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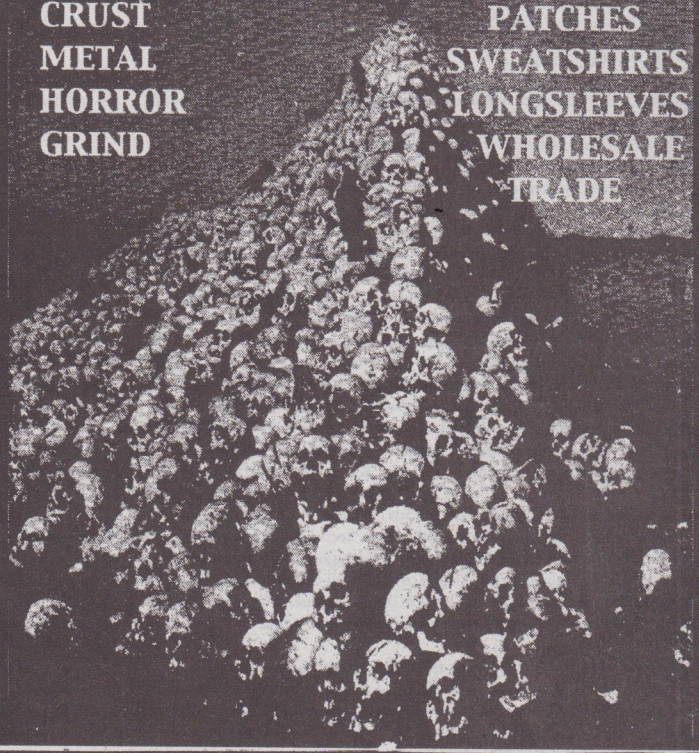

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MRR NEWS
No. 243
August 2003
compiled by:
Arwen Curry

"I JUST PULLED THE TRIGGER"

by Bob Graham
Published by the London Evening Standard

At first glance they appear to be the archetypal Band Of Brothers of Hollywood myth, brave and honest men united in common purpose.
But a closer look at these American GIs, sweltering in the heat of an unwelcoming Iraq, reveals the glazed eyes and limp expressions of those who have witnessed a war they do not understand and have begun to resent. By their own admission these American soldiers have killed civilians without hesitation, shot wounded fighters and left others to die in agony.

Specialist Anthony Castillo: "We're more angry at the generals who are making these decisions and who never hit the ground, and who don't get shot at or have to look at the bloody bodies and the burnt-out bodies, and the dead babies and all that kinda stuff."

What they told me, in a series of extraordinary interviews, will make uncomfortable reading for US and British politicians and senior military staff desperate to prevent the liberation of Iraq turning into a quagmire of Vietnam proportions, where the behavior of troops feeds the hatred of an occupied people.

Sergeant First Class John Meadows revealed the mindset that has led to hundreds of innocent Iraqi civilians being killed alongside fighters deliberately dressed in civilian clothes. "You can't distinguish between who's trying to kill you and who's not," he said. "Like, the only way to get through s*** like that was to concentrate on getting through it by killing as many people as you can, people you know are trying to kill you. Killing them first and getting home."

These GIs, from Bravo Company of the 3/15th US Infantry Division, are caught in an impossible situation. More than 40 of their number have been killed by hostile forces since 1 May - when President Bush declared major military operations were over - and the number of hit-and-run attacks is on the increase. They face a resentful civilian population and, hiding among it, a number of guerrilla fighters still loyal to the old regime. A lone Iraqi sniper nicknamed The Hunter is believed to have claimed his sixth American victim this week in a suburb of Baghdad.

The man, said to be a former member of the Republican Guard Special Forces, has developed a cult status among some Iraqis. One Baghdad resident, Assad al Amari, said: "He is fighting for Iraq on his own. There will be many more Americans killed because they cannot stop The Hunter. He will be given the protection of people who will let him use their homes for his shooting."

In this hostile atmosphere the men of Bravo Company are asked to maintain order, yet at the same time win hearts and minds. It is not a dilemma they feel able to resolve. They spoke to me - dressed in uniforms they have worn for the past six weeks - at their base in Fallujah. Here US troops killed 18 demonstrators at a pro-Saddam rally soon after the war and now face local fighters bent on revenge.

Their attitude to these dangers is summed up by Specialist (Corporal) Michael Richardson, 22. "There was no dilemma when it came to shooting people who were not in uniform, I just pulled the trigger. It was up close and personal the whole time, there wasn't a big distance. If they were there, they were enemy, whether in uniform or not. Some were, some weren't."

Specialist Anthony Castillo added: "When there were civilians there we did the mission that had to be done. When they were there, they were at the wrong spot, so they were considered enemy." In one major battle - at the southern end of Baghdad at the intersection of the main highways - the soldiers estimate about 70 per cent of the enemy's 400-or-so fighters were dressed as civilians.

Sgt Meadows explained: "The fight lasted for about eight hours and they just kept on coming all day from everywhere, from all sides. They were all in plain clothes.

"We had dropped fliers a couple of days prior saying to people to get out of the area if they didn't want to fight, so basically anyone who was there was a combatant. If they were dumb enough to stand in front of tanks or drive a car towards a tank, then they were there to fight. On that day it took away the dilemma of who to fire at, anyone who was there was a combatant."

Cpl Richardson added: "That day nothing went with the training. There were females fighting; there were some that, when they saw you f****** coming, they'd just drop their s*** and try to give up; and some guys were shot and they'd play dead, and when you'd go by they'd reach for their weapons. That day it was just f****** everything. When we face women or injured that try to grab their weapons, we just finish them off. You've gotta, no choice."

Such is their level of hatred they preferred to kill rather than merely injure. Sgt Meadows, 34, said: "The worst thing is to shoot one of them, then go help him." Sergeant Adrian Pedro Quinones, 26, chipped in: "In that situation you're angry, you're raging. They'd just been shooting at my men - they were putting my guys in a casket and eight feet under, that's what they were trying to do.

"And now, they're laying there and I have to help them, I have a responsibility to ensure my men help them." Cpl Richardson said: "S***, I didn't help any of them. I wouldn't help the f******. There were some you let die. And there were some you double-tapped."

He held out his hand as if firing a gun and clucked his tongue twice. He said: "Once you'd reached the objective, and once you'd shot them and you're moving through, anything there, you shoot again. You didn't want any prisoners of war. You hate them so bad while you're fighting, and you're so terrified, you can't really convey the feeling, but you don't want them to live."

These soldiers have faced fighters from other Arab countries. "It wasn't even Iraqis that we was killing, it was Syrians," said Sgt Meadows. "We spoke to some of the people and Saddam made a call for his Arab brothers for a holy war against us, and they said they came here to fight us. Whadda we ever do to them?"

Cpl Richardson intervened: "S***, that didn't really matter who they were. They wanted to fight us so they were the enemy. We had to take over Baghdad, period, it didn't matter who was in there."

The GIs spoke of shooting civilians at roadblocks. Sgt Meadows said: "When they used white flags we were told to stop them at 400 meters out and then strip them down naked then bring them through. Most obeyed the order. We knew about others who had problems with [Iraqis] carrying white flags and then opening up on our guys. We knew about every trick they were trying to do. Then they'd use cars to try and drive at us. They were men, women and children. That day we shot up a lot of cars.

"We'd shoot warning shots at them and they'd keep coming, so we'd kill them. We'd fire a warning shot over the top of them or on the road. When people criticize us killing civilians they don't know that a lot of these civilians were combatants, they really were . And they still are."

The men have been traumatized by their experiences. Cpl Richardson-said: "At night time you think about all the people you killed. It just never gets off your head, none of this stuff does. There's no chance to forget it, we're still here, we've been here so long. Most people leave after combat but we haven't."

Sgt Meadows said men under his command had been seeking help for severe depression: "They've already seen psychiatrists and the chain of command has got letters back saying 'these men need to be taken out of this situation'. But nothing's happened." Cpl Richardson added: "Some soldiers don't even f****** sleep at night. They sit up all f****** night long doing s*** to keep themselves busy - to keep their minds off this f****** stuff. It's the only way they can handle it. It's not so far from being crazy but it's their way of coping. There's one guy trying to build a little pool out the back, pointless stuff but it keeps him busy."

Sgt Meadows said: "For me, it's like snap-shot photos. Like pictures of maggots on tongues, babies with their heads on the ground, men with their heads halfway off and their eyes wide open and mouths wide open. I see it every day, every single day. The smells and the torsos burning, the entire route up to Baghdad, from 20 March to 7 April, nothing but burned bodies."

Specialist Bryan Barnhart, 21, joined in: "I also got the images like snapshots in my head. There are bodies that we saw when we went back to secure a place we'd taken. The bodies were still there and they'd been baking in the sun. Their bodies were bloated three times the size."

Sgt Quinones explained: "There are psychiatrists who are trying to sort out their problems but they say it's because of long combat environment. They know we need to be taken away from that environment." But the group's tour of duty has been extended and the men have been forced to remain as peacekeepers. Cpl Richardson said: "Now we're in this peacekeeping, we're always firing off a warning shot at people that don't wanna listen to you. You make up the rules as you go along.

"Like, in Fallujah we get rocks thrown at us by kids. You wanna turn round and shoot one of the little f*****s but you know you can't do that. Their parents know if they came out and threw rocks we'd shoot them. So that's why they send the kids out." Sgt Meadows said: "Can you imagine being a soldier and being told 'you're fighting a war, then when you finish you can go home'.

"You go and fight that war, and you win decisively, but now you have to stay and stabilize the situation. We are having to go from a full warfighting mindset to a peacekeeping mindset overnight. Right after shooting at people who were trying to kill you, you now have to help them."

The anger towards their own senior officers is obvious. Cpl Richardson said: "We weren't trained for this stuff now. It makes you resentful they're holding us on here. It pisses everyone off, we were told once the war was over we'd leave when our replacements get here. Well, our replacements got here and we're still here."

Specialist Castillo said: "We're more angry at the generals who are making these decisions and who never hit the ground, and who don't get shot at or have to look at the bloody bodies and the burnt-out bodies, and the dead babies and all that kinda stuff." Sgt Quinones added: "Most of these soldiers are in their early twenties and late teens. They've seen, in less than a month, more than any man should see in a whole lifetime. It's time for us to go home."

On whether the war was one worth fighting, Sgt Meadows said: "I don't care about Iraq one way or the other. I couldn't care less. [Saddam] could still be in power and, to me, it wasn't worth leaving my family for; for getting shot at and almost dying two or three times, there's nothing worth that to me." Even though no Iraqis were involved, and there is no proof Saddam was behind it, the attack on the World Trade Center provides Cpl Richardson and many others with the justification for invading Iraq.

"There's a picture of the World Trade Center hanging up by my bed and I keep one in my Kevlar [flak jacket]. Every time I feel sorry for these people I look at that. I think, 'They hit us at home and, now, it's our turn.' I don't want to say payback but, you know, it's pretty much payback."

BUSH FRIES CLIMATE CHANGE

by Derrick Z. Jackson
Excerpted from the Boston Globe

Undaunted by accusations of cooking the books for war, President Bush deep-fried the data on global warming.

The *New York Times* reported yesterday that the White House took a draft report on the state of the environment by the Environmental Protection Agency and deleted critical portions on climate change. The White House knocked out references to studies that directly mentioned industrial pollution and vehicle exhaust as contributors to global warming.

The administration took out a phrase that said, "Climate change has global consequences for human health and the environment." It replaced it with gobbledygook. The White House wrote, "The complexity of the Earth system and the interconnections among its components make it a scientific challenge to document change, diagnose its causes, and develop useful projections of how natural variability and human actions may affect the global environment in the future. Because of these complexities and the potentially profound consequences of climate change and variability, climate change has become a capstone scientific and societal issue for this generation and the next, and perhaps even beyond."

Bush is trying to fry climate change until the issue is seemingly so tough to comprehend that Americans dismiss it. Two and a half years into his presidency, this recipe has worked magnificently. In the first few months of his presidency, Bush let EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman tell the world that the United States took seriously the carbon dioxide emissions that are such a major source of global warming. But when Bush himself spoke, it was either to back out of the Kyoto global agreement on climate change or reverse a pledge to limit carbon dioxide emissions. Bush said he needed to wait until he had "sound science" on the subject.

Over the months, evidence continued to mount in scientific journals that global warming could have dramatic and potentially catastrophic results for coastlines and cause a spread of disease. The evidence was so overwhelming that the 2001 report by the National Research Council that Bush himself commissioned said, "Greenhouse gases are accumulating in Earth's atmosphere as a result of human activities." The report later said, "Global warming could well have serious adverse societal and ecological impacts by the end of this century." The report warned that temperatures and sea levels will continue to rise even under conservative scenarios. It also supported a full assessment of global warming lest anything less "may well underestimate the magnitude of the eventual impacts."

Since then Bush, with his campaign coffers lined with fossil fuel energy interests and his administration bursting with oil connections, has done his best to suppress the magnitude of the possible impacts. Late in 2001 the council added a report that said global warming may increase the chance of abrupt climate change, changes that could place poor countries at particular risk.

Then, a year ago, Whitman sent a report to the United Nations that reconfirmed that "human activity" is a real cause of the greenhouse effect. While the first victims of global warming are assumed to be poor people in low-lying countries, this report predicted a crazy quilt of long-term disruptions and destruction of ecosystems throughout the United States, from the drying up of ponds in the Midwest to the disappearance of forests in the South to the death of fish in the Pacific Northwest.

Bush crumpled all those reports and threw them into his political incinerator. He embarrassed Whitman even more definitively, saying: "I read the report put out by the bureaucracy." This was obviously too much for Whitman to take. She recently announced her resignation and is leaving her post next week. So giddy over having gotten rid of the one person who showed at least minimal concern for the environment, the White House now appears to be depending much more upon so-called facts from organizations who have obvious reasons to dismiss global warming, such as the American Petroleum Institute.

With the neutering of the EPA report, it should make one wonder. This deletion of data on climate change should raise even more questions as to whether Bush cooked the books for war. Bush is in the control of oil interests in Washington. With the presence of our troops, President Bush for practical purposes now controls the oil of Iraq.

America's lust for oil hangs so ominously around the invasion of Iraq and in the denial of the impact of global warming that facts from intelligence agencies and scientific journals have become meaningless. One day, the dismissal of the facts will come back in a disastrous way. Bush and the United States may have the oil now. Meanwhile, the planet is cooking and frying.

DEA USES RAVE ACT TO STOP A BENEFIT TO RAISE MONEY FOR MARIJUANA REFORM

Only two months after the RAVE Act was passed by Congress, it has been used by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to intimidate the owners of a Billings, Montana, venue into canceling a combined benefit for the Montana chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) and Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP). One of the biggest reasons the Drug Policy Alliance waged a national campaign to stop the RAVE Act was that we feared it would be used to shut down political events like this.

On the day the fundraiser was set to take place, a Billings-based DEA agent presented the venue owners with a copy of the RAVE Act warning them that they could face a fine of $250,000 if illicit drugs were found in the premises. The bands, most of which regularly played at the venue, were also approached and warned that their participation in the event could result in a fine.

Rather than risk the possibility of enormous fines, the venue decided to cancel the event. This blatant intimidation by the DEA was obviously designed to shut down the marijuana reform fundraiser. Unless the American people speak out against this attack on free speech, the DEA will be emboldened to use the law against other events they do not like, such as all-night dance parties, hip hop concerts, hemp festivals, and circuit parties.

Join the Drug Policy Alliance, National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, Students for Sensible Drug Policy, and numerous other organizations in our campaign to pressure the DEA to stop using the RAVE Act to shut down political events.

ACTIONS TO TAKE

1) Fax the DEA. Urge Acting Administrator William Simpkins to stop using the RAVE Act to harass innocent business owners and stifle free speech.
http://actioncenter.drugpolicy.org/ctt.asp?u=14675&l=2008

2) Forward this alert to friends and family. Send it to e-mail lists and post it in chat rooms.

BACKGROUND

Sponsored by Senator Biden (D-DE), the RAVE Act (also known as the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act) was first introduced last year. It proved so controversial then that two of its original co-sponsors withdrew their support because they feared it would send innocent business owners to jail. Business owners collected over 20,000 signatures in opposition to the bill. Protests against it were held around the country and tens of thousands of voters urged their elected official to oppose it. Controversy over the bill stalled it last year, but Senator Biden attached it to the popular "Amber Alert" bill without public debate or a vote of Congress earlier this year and snuck it into law.

The RAVE Act expands federal law to make it easier to jail and imprison event organizers and property owners that fail to stop drug offenses from occurring on their property—even in cases when they take serious steps to reduce drug offenses. It applies to "any place," including bars and nightclubs, hotels, apartment buildings, and homes. Legal experts warned that the law was so broad that it could be used to shut down not only raves and electronic music events, but also hip hop, rock, and country music concerts, sporting events, gay and lesbian fundraisers, political protests, and any other event federal agents do not like.

On May 30th an agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) told managers of the Eagle Lodge in Billings, Montana that the Lodge could be fined $250,000 if anyone smoked marijuana during a planned benefit to raise money for a campaign to change Montana's medical marijuana law. After consulting their attorneys, the Eagle Lodge canceled the event.

For more information on the RAVE Act see:
http://actioncenter.drugpolicy.org/ctt.asp?u=14675&l=1989

>For more information on the DEA and the Eagle Lodge see:
http://actioncenter.drugpolicy.org/ctt.asp?u=14675&l=1990

Fax the DEA and Tell Acting Administrator William Simpkins to Stop Using the RAVE Act Against Political Events http://actioncenter.drugpolicy.org/ctt.asp?u=14675&l=2008

US Restrictions on Iraqi Media Spark Criticism

by Ellen Barry
Excerpted from the Boston Globe

NAJAF, Iraq— Coalition soldiers raided the distribution center for Sadda-al-Auma newspaper last week, seizing extra copies of its second edition and detaining and interrogating its employees, said staff at the newspaper.

Nevertheless, Sadda-al-Auma, or The Echo of the Nation, was back on the newsstands with a third edition on Tuesday, selling its pungent brand of postwar analysis: Its front page invited the people of Najaf to join the Ramadi resistance movement; warned that Zionist groups were commandeering some of Baghdad's best real estate; and damned unveiled women for their "stinking, Western ideas," asking, "Is this liberty, to walk around naked?"

Last week the US-led coalition authority brought a strong hand down on the hurly-burly collection of new voices that have cluttered Iraqi newsstands, virtually absent of any advertising, since Saddam Hussein fell. The new law bans incitement of violence against American troops or against any religious, ethnic, or gender group, and prohibits any publication that promotes a return of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party. US officials insist the law applies only to material that undermines civil order that is necessary for a free and democratic Iraq and that it is meant to prevent violence.

"It's not designed to be restrictive," said Charles Heatly, a coalition spokesman. "We welcome the emergence of a free press, and we have no intention of stifling free speech."

The act, which carries fines and prison sentences, has spawned resentment among members of the new media class, who argue that newspapers restrained from criticizing the American forces hardly constitute a free press.

WAR POLL UNCOVERS FACT GAP:
MANY MISTAKENLY BELIEVE U.S. FOUND WMDS IN IRAQ

by Frank Davies
Excerpted from the Philadelphia Inquirer

WASHINGTON - A third of the American public believes U.S. forces have found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, according to a recent poll. Twenty-two percent said Iraq actually used chemical or biological weapons.

Before the war, the U.S. media often reported as a fact the assertions by the Bush administration that Iraq possessed large stockpiles of illegal weapons.

During and after the war, reports of possible weapons discoveries were often trumpeted on front pages, while follow-up stories debunking the reports received less attention.

But such weapons have not been found in Iraq and were not used.

Before the war, half of those polled in a survey said Iraqis were among the 19 hijackers on Sept. 11, 2001. But most of the Sept. 11 terrorists were Saudis; none was an Iraqi.

The results startled even the pollsters who conducted and analyzed the surveys. How could so many people be so wrong about information that has dominated news coverage for almost two years?

"It's a striking finding," said Steve Kull, director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, which asked the weapons questions during a May 14-18 poll of 1,256 respondents.

He added: "Given the intensive news coverage and high levels of public attention, this level of misinformation suggests some Americans may be avoiding having an experience of cognitive dissonance."

That is, of having their beliefs conflict with the facts. Kull noted that the mistaken belief that weapons had been found "is substantially greater among those who favored the war."

Pollsters and political analysts offer several reasons for the gaps between facts and beliefs: the public's short attention span on foreign news, fragmentary or conflicting media reports that lacked depth or skepticism, and Bush administration efforts to sell a war by oversimplifying the threat.

AFRICANS CHALLENGE BUSH CLAIM THAT GM FOOD GOOD FOR THEM

by Katrin Dauenhauer

As the transatlantic dispute over the future of genetically modified (GM) food heats up, African activists say it is time to publicly challenge the image that the Bush administration is presenting on the issue.

Washington, they say, is not entitled to speak on behalf of African states on the matter.

"How can one country decide for another country without taking into account the opinion of the other country's people?" Amadou C. Kanoute, regional director of the African office of Consumers International said at a conference here Tuesday organized by Public Citizen.

"Genetic Engineering (GE) will not solve the problem of hunger," he added.

In filing a formal complaint last month with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the European Union (EU) for banning GM products, U.S. officials said they were protecting the interests of Africans suffering from hunger, who could be fed with GM food.

But the real reason for their claim is the oversupply of GM crops and the fact that the United States grows two-thirds of the world's GM crops, and views Africa as a potential market for them, said Kanoute.

Instead of alleviating hunger, he added, GM crops pose potential dangers—a view that is also supported by a number of other African activists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

GM opponents fear that the technology, which manipulates the genetic code of the seed to give it desired characteristics—such as faster growing times or resistance to pests—will destroy the model of production and consumption that sustains more than 70 percent of the farmers in Africa. GM technology, they say, promotes monoculture and seeks to eliminate all possible competition from non-GM crops.

According to Public Citizen, African countries on their own sought global regulations on GM products, not, as the administration stated, under pressure from European countries.

SCOTTY JERNIGAN, 1975-2003: MUSICIAN REMEMBERED AS CAREFREE, WELL-LIKED

By Mike Lewis
excerpted from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer

With an attitude and manner as light as his music was heavy, Scotty Jernigan owned the talent to set a standard for rock drummers.

"The thing that struck me about him was how carefree he was," said Calvin Johnson, owner of K Records in Olympia, the label that signed Mr. Jernigan's former band, Karp.

Mr. Jernigan, 28, died early Tuesday morning in a boating accident on Lake Washington.

At the time of his death, Mr. Jernigan was the drummer for popular local band The Whip. The band had reunited the drummer with his longtime friend and former Karp band mate, Jarred Warren, and former Melvins bassist Joe Preston.

Mr. Jernigan's death devastated family, friends, fans, club owners and fellow musicians, who said they loved the man and his powerful, raucous rhythms.

During the 1990s, Mr. Jernigan also played in The Bronze. But it was in Olympia-based Karp that he and his band began to get national attention

From the mid-'90s until the band disbanded in 1999, Karp released three well-received albums. The band split up in 1999 as members worked on other projects, leaving Karp's fiercely loyal fans upset.

At K Records in Olympia, Johnson said it is hard on everyone to lose someone as well-liked as Mr. Jernigan.

Even after the band and the label parted ways, the company kept up its Karp wall. It included this note from a mail-order customer:

"Karp is the only band I like in your entire catalog."

NEW STUDIES REVEAL POOR U.S. TREATMENT OF ASYLUM SEEKERS, CHILDREN

by Jim Lobe
excerpted by OneWorld.net

WASHINGTON - Less than a month after an internal Justice Department audit found widespread abuse of hundreds of Muslim immigrants detained after the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and the Pentagon, two new reports released this week are charging that the detention of unaccompanied immigrant children and asylum seekers is causing serious harm to innocent people who need protection rather than prison.

In one study, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) found that the mental health and well-being of asylum seekers detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) after arriving in New York area airports was generally "extremely poor and worsened the longer the individuals were in detention."

"Asylum seekers typically suffered tremendous indignities—torture, rape—at the hands of their own government," said Dr. Allen Keller, a co-author of the report, 'From Persecution to Prison.' "We should be offering protection rather than making worse their already fragile state of health by indiscriminately detaining asylum seekers."

At the same time, Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) charged in a report released here Wednesday that about one- third of all children in the custody of U.S. immigration authorities spend at least some time in jail-like facilities designed to hold young offenders, where they may be subjected to shackling, strip searches, solitary confinement, and verbal abuse from guards and other detainees.

"It is appalling that many officials don't understand the difference between a juvenile offender and an unaccompanied child and that they deny these fragile young asylum seekers respect and rights," said William Schulz, AIUSA's executive director.

"This is grossly unfair to children whose only 'offense' is seeking safe haven in the U.S. Many have fled dangerous situations, including child trafficking, abusive families and armed rebel forces," he said. "when we treat these children harshly, they are further traumatized, and our country's credibility as a protector of rights is eroded."

WHEN WILL HOUSE REPUBLICANS CALL FOR BUSH'S IMPEACHMENT?

by Steve Pittelli

It has now become clear that President Bush lied to the American people in order to promote a war. That war continues and has already led to the death of thousands of Iraqi civilians, hundreds of U.S. soldiers and countless Iraqi soldiers. In truth, Bush's lies are more than just lies. They are high crimes and the President should now be subject to impeachment.

There are those who say that the President's current popularity or the Republican majority in the House and Senate preclude the possibility of his impeachment. Perhaps they are underestimating the moral integrity of our Republican congressmen. In fact, some of them have already publicly stated their opinions on this subject. They did so in February of 1999 when they served as Impeachment Trial Managers for the Senate Impeachment Trial of former President Clinton. Let's look at what they had to say then:

Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Illinois),
"There is a visibility factor in the president's public acts, and those which betray a trust or reveal contempt for the law are hard to sweep under the rug...They reverberate, they ricochet all over the land and provide the worst possible example for our young people."

Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisconsin)
"The truth is still the truth, and a lie is still a lie, and the rule of law should apply to everyone, no matter what excuses are made by the president's defenders... We have done so because of our devotion to the rule of law and our fear that if the president does not suffer the legal and constitutional consequences of his actions, the impact of allowing the president to stand above the law will be felt for generations to come...laws not enforced are open invitations for more serious and more criminal behavior."

Steve Chabot (R-Ohio)
"It would be wrong for you to tell America's children that some lies are all right. It would be wrong to show the rest of the world that some of our laws don't really matter."

Steve Buyer (R- Indiana)
"I have also heard some senators from both sides of the aisle state publicly: I think these offenses rise to the level of high crimes and misdemeanors. Now, to state publicly that you believe that high crimes and misdemeanors have occurred but for some reason you have this desire not to remove the president—that desire, though, does not square with the law, the Constitution, and the Senate's precedents for removing federal judges for similar offenses."

Rep. Lindsey Graham (R - South Carolina, Now Senator)
"The president of the United States sets atop of the legal pyramid. If there's reasonable doubt about his ability to faithfully execute the laws of the land, our future would be better off if that individual is removed. And let me tell you where it all comes down to me. If you can go back and explain to your children and your constituents how you can be truthful and misleading at the same time, good luck."

These, of course, are just a few examples. It is likely that most of those who voted to impeach Clinton are on record as to the high ethical standards they were following. Certainly, they must follow these same standards when considering Bush's egregious lies and the consequences of those lies. It is time to draft the Articles of Impeachment and let those who oppose them state why this case deserves more leniency than was given to former President Clinton.

Steve Pitelli is a physician and peace activist living on the Central Coast of California. He can be reached at NoBushWar@aol.com

SESAME STREET BREAKS IRAQI POWS

'CULTURALLY OFFENSIVE' MUSIC IS BEING USED TO BREAK PRISONERS

Uncooperative prisoners are being exposed for prolonged periods to tracks by rock group Metallica and music from children's TV programmes Sesame Street and Barney in the hope of making them talk.

The US's Psychological Operations Company (Psy Ops) said the aim was to break a prisoner's resistance through sleep deprivation and playing music that was culturally offensive to them. However, human rights organisation, Amnesty International, said such tactics may constitute torture—and coalition forces could be in breach of the Geneva Convention.

Sergeant Mark Hadsell, of Psy Ops, told *Newsweek* magazine: "These people haven't heard heavy metal.

"They can't take it. If you play it for 24 hours, your brain and body functions start to slide, your train of thought slows down and your will is broken. That's when we come in and talk to them."

Sgt Hadsell's favourites are said to be 'Bodies' from the XXX film soundtrack and Metallica's 'Enter Sandman'.

The theme tune from the US children's programme *Sesame Street* and songs from the purple singing dinosaur Barney are also on their hit list.

"In training, they forced me to listen to the Barney "I Love You" song for 45 minutes. I never want to go through that again," one US operative told the magazine.

Rick Hoffman, vice president of the Psy Ops Veterans Association, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that such a tactic would have no long-lasting effect on prisoners.

"The use of this kind of audio-technique is rather new in interrogation," he said.

"There have been other kinds of non-lethal, non-harmful techniques, such as sleep deprivation... which leave no long-lasting effects but do have the end result of breaking down the individual's will to resist questioning."

Amnesty International told BBC News Online that at least one Iraqi captive—a civilian, later released—had reported being kept awake for up to four days by loud music.

"This is an issue that seriously concerns us. If there is a prolonged period of sleep deprivation, it could well be considered torture," said a spokeswoman.

She said they were looking into whether the US and UK were abiding by their responsibilities under the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war.

BIODIVERSITY TREATY START-DATE SET AMID GROWING INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY

by Jim Lobe
Published by OneWorld.net

Ratification of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety by the South Pacific island nation of Palau last Friday sets next September 11 as the date that the 21st century's first environmental treaty will become international law—over the strong objections of the Bush administration.

Palau became the 50th country to ratify the Protocol, which aims to protect the environment from the potential risks of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the benchmark set by the 1992 treaty for entering into force. The treaty becomes international law 90 days after the 50th country ratifies it.

Palau's ratification was lauded by a number of environmental groups, including Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) which stressed that the treaty is the first international agreement that "clearly says that GMOs 'are different and therefore require a different treatment'" than conventional plants or animals, a notion that has been strenuously resisted by the Bush administration.

"The times of uncontrolled trade of GMOs are over," said FoEI chairman Ricardo Navarro. "The Biosafety Protocol sets a new era for global regulation of GMOs." He said the treaty will encourage countries to prevent contamination of GM seed products by implementing an identity preservation system.

"Exporters from all over the world should take adequate measures to prevent contamination of GM seed products," he said.

Palau's ratification coincided with the release of a report by the London-based Independent Science Panel (ISP), a group of scientists from seven countries who oppose the use and spread of GMOs, which they consider to pose substantial risks to human health and the environment. .

"GM crops have failed to deliver the promised benefits and are posing escalating problems on the farm," according to the statement signed by 25 biological scientists. "Transgenic contamination is now widely acknowledge to be unavoidable and hence there can be no co-existence of GM and non-GM agriculture. Most important of all, GM crops have not been proven safe," the scientists wrote in 'The Case for a GM-Free Sustainable World.'

Their statement was accompanied by a major report covering more than 200 studies.

Both the treaty's entry into force and the ISP statement come amid a significant escalation of the global debate over GMOs, which have been promoted by the U.S. as a possible answer to world food problems. Genes that bolster drought resistance or resistance to certain kinds of pests, for example, can be implanted in crops that are common in Africa, according to the technology's boosters.

Last month the United States, which is home to the world's largest bio-techology companies, filed a formal complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the European Union for its ban on GMO products.

In addition senior administration officials, including President Bush, have charged that the EU's opposition to GMOs is having disastrous consequences in poor nations, especially in Africa. Late last year, when a prolonged drought threatened the lives of millions of southern Africans, Washington shipped thousands of tons of GM maize, but several countries either rejected it or conditioned their acceptance on its being milled to eliminate the chances that seed corn could get through.

The EU ban, Bush charged, "has caused many African nations to avoid investing biotechnologies, for fear that their products will be shut out of European markets. European governments should join—not hinder—the great cause of ending hunger in Africa." U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick even charged that the EU's policies were "immoral."

But the EU and many developing countries have taken a much more conservative view of GMO technology. They claim that it has not been tested sufficiently or over enough time to determine its potential impacts on health and the environment. "We feel the need for more precautions than the Americans," the EU's trade commissioner Pascal Lamy said recently.

The Bush administration, however, insists that there is no scientific evidence that GMO products represent a risk to health or the environment, and that the real basis of the EU's opposition is its desire to protect local agriculture from U.S. competition.

The Biosafety Protocol generally supports the conservative approach of the EU. Under its provisions, countries that export GMOs will be required to provide detailed information to recipient countries before shipping the products to enable them to decide whether or not they should assume the risks.

The Protocol will also require all exporters of GMOs that are released into the environment to take measures to prevent their spread into surrounding areas in ways that could contaminate conventional species.

According to Friends of the Earth, the Protocol still has serious gaps, including a procedure for assessing liability for violations. The group wants mechanisms put in place to ensure that if GM crops do contaminate the environment, corporations or exporters responsible for the contamination will be held accountable.

In addition, the group noted, the international notification system that will take effect under the Protocol will not replace national legislation on the use of GMOs. In its view, countries should adopt legislation similar to the EU's until more scientific evidence can be collected and assessed.

The ISP report offers 13 reasons for banning GM crops, many of which directly contradict the Bush administration's contentions. GM crops, it says, have largely failed to deliver on the promise of sharp increases in yields and significant reductions in the need for herbicides and pesticides, while they present significant risks, such as the creation of "super-viruses" and super weeds.

It also rejects the argument that GM crops could be an answer to hunger in poor countries. "There is no pressing need for GM crops, as world agriculture is in overproduction and people go hungry because of poverty, not because of lack of GM seeds, when they are too poor to buy from the plenty around them," said Peter Rosset, an agricultural ecologist and co-director of the Oakland-based Institute for Food and Development Policy.

U.S. POLICING OF BIOTECH CROPS DENOUNCED

excerpted from the Environment News Service

Federal government agencies are failing to monitor genetically engineered crops to protect the environment and public health, according to two separate studies released today.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) says that according to its review of government data farmers are routinely overplanting corn that is genetically engineered (GE) to be insect resistant.

The corn growers are failing to comply with a government requirement to plant 20 percent of their acreage with non-GE corn as a refuge. The refuge is intended to prevent the breeding of insects resistant to the pesticide produced by engineered corn that contains a protein from the soil bacterium, Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt).

The protein kills Lepidoptera larvae, in particular, the European corn borer. Growers use Bt corn as an alternative to spraying insecticides for control of European and southwestern corn borers.

The data analyzed by the CSPI was collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service. The statistics show that 19 percent of all Bt corn farms in Iowa, Minnesota, and Nebraska - about 10,000 farms - violated the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) refuge requirements in 2002.

Thirteen percent of farmers growing Bt corn in those three states planted no refuges at all.

"Noncompliance on this scale shows that current regulations aren't up to the task," said Gregory Jaffe, director of CSPI's biotechnology project. "Both the EPA and the biotech industry must do more to make sure that farmers meet these very basic obligations, so that the benefits of this technology won't be squandered."

Because of its pesticidal properties, Bt corn is regulated by the EPA, rather than by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

In its report, "Planting Trouble," the Center for Science in the Public Interest recommends that the EPA determine farmers' compliance with its refuge requirements using data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service, rather than what the organization terms "the less reliable data" from the biotechnology industry's telephone survey of farmers.

In a letter today, the CSPI urged EPA Administrator Christie Whitman to implement the report's recommendations. The CSPI wants biotech firms to conduct on farm inspections and to require farmers to document their compliance with maps and seed purchase records.

Unlike some environmental or consumer groups, the CSPI does not oppose agricultural biotechnology as long as it is appropriately regulated to safeguard human health and the environment, but the Center has often faulted the biotech industry for its disregard of government oversight.

"As biotech applications become even more advanced, and potentially more dangerous, this kind of noncompliance will be even less tolerable," Jaffe said.

In a separate report, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG) criticizes the Agriculture Department's oversight of field experiments in the United States. The report is critical of testing procedures used in monitoring experimental genetically modified crops in the field.

USPIRG warns that nearly 70 percent of all field tests of genetically engineered crops conducted in the last year contain secret genes classified as confidential business information to which the public has no access.

A field test last fall of a genetically engineered crop designed to produce a pig vaccine contaminated commercial crops, USPIRG reports. As a result, 500,000 bushels of soybeans had to be quarantined and were destroyed.

USPIRG quotes a 2002 National Academy of Sciences report confirming that the federal government permitted commercial growth of a variety of genetically engineered corn found toxic to monarch butterflies under field conditions.

If field experiments are not properly monitored, PIRG says the resulting genetic pollution can put farmers' livelihoods and the environment at risk.

Federal food law requires premarket approval for food additives, whether or not they are the products of biotechnology, molecular techniques that are used to insert genes from one type of organism into another - in this case the insertion of a Bt gene into a corn plant.

The federal agency responsible for regulating foods, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), treats substances added to food products through biotechnology as food additives only if they are significantly different in structure, function or amount than substances currently found in food.

If a new food product developed through biotechnology does not contain substances that are significantly different from those already in the diet, it does not require premarket approval.

Currently, genetically modified foods in the United States do not require special labeling to notify consumers that a food or ingredient is a bioengineered product.

Gay Is The New Black

by Gary Younge
Published by the Guardian/UK

"The difference between being black and being gay," said one gay activist, "is that you don't have to come down at breakfast one morning and break it to your parents: 'Mum, Dad, I'm black.'" In American politics at present it also means that if you're black, you are less likely to be the subject of overt abuse from Republicans. And if you are, then you can at least usually expect them to be punished for it.

The same can not be said for lesbians and gay men. Six months after senator Trent Lott was forced to resign after suggesting that America would have been a better place if a segregationist had won the presidency in the 40s, his colleagues appear free to spout homophobia at will and whim.

Most recent was the decision by the US justice department - where attorney general John Ashcroft holds prayer meetings every morning - to ban its employees from holding a lesbian and gay pride event (this is gay pride month). Such was the furore that by the end of last week the decision had been partly reversed - the event can go ahead but this time without government funding. More shocking was Pennsylvania senator, Rick Santorum - number three in the nation's upper chamber - who in April ranked homosexuality alongside polygamy, incest, adultery and bestiality.

After some initial dithering, to gauge the public mood, Lott was dumped. After similar prevarication, Santorum was defended. "[He] took a very courageous and moral position based upon principles and his world view," said Tom DeLay, the house majority leader.

Republican strategist, Rich Galen, summed up the contradiction thus: "In America in 2003, you can't say bad things about African-Americans, but you can still say bad things about gays. That's where we are."

That is is not quite true. Racism in America's public discourse is certainly more subtle than homophobia, but no less pervasive. Whenever politicians refer to welfare, crime, inner-city deprivation, teenage pregnancy or affirmative action - which is often - they are talking about race, and rarely in terms supportive of minorities.

While racism has been employed to galvanize the white Republican base in past elections - most notably by president George Bush's father in 1988 and Newt Gingrich in 1994 - homophobia may yet become the rallying cry for the next one. When it comes to finding a signifier for the indulgent excesses of liberal Democrats and the Republicans' no-nonsense adherence to the values of middle America, gay is the new black.

"Candidate Bush said in the second [presidential] debate that he felt marriage was a sacred covenant, limited to a man and a woman," said Kenneth Connor, president of the rightwing Family Research Council. "That was not a huge issue in 2000. Mark it down. It will be a big, big issue in 2004."

This is not President Bush's wish. He would rather the whole issue just went away. Since he came to office he has appointed an openly gay ambassador and Aids tsar. But all his judicial appointments so far have been hostile to gay rights, and his refusal to reprimand Santorum indicates that he is all too willing to tolerate intolerance in his ranks.

For Bush this is not a matter of moral principle but political calculation. He has made enough of an impact on restricting abortion rights to keep the faithful happy and provide a lightning rod for Democrats and women's groups. He does not need any more enemies. As the standard-bearer of compassionate conservatism he has no wish to be seen as isolating a relatively small group for special opprobrium - unless of course they are Arab immigrants, in which case he can hide behind national security. The order to allow the justice department's gay pride event to go ahead after all is widely believed to have come from the White House.

Moreover, the ramifications of scapegoating lesbians and gays would go way beyond the actual gay voters - who according to the gay advocacy group, the Human Rights Campaign, comprise just 5% of the electorate. A Republican party that is mean to a few is widely regarded as having the potential to be mean to the many. The issue of sexual orientation may not be as explosive a touchstone as race, but a homophobic campaign would attract few new voters and repel many - particularly among moderates, women and the young. The issue of gay marriage is incredibly divisive. Polls show that while most Americans (51%) are against it, more than a third - a large proportion of whom are women - support it.

The response to last weekend's lingering televised kiss between Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, two gay winners of the Tony awards, also suggests political culture is lagging way behind popular culture. "I love this man," said Shaiman. "We're not allowed to get married in this world ... But I'd like to declare, in front of all these people, I love you and I'd like to live with you the rest of my life." The audience cheered. Of the 8 million viewers there were just 10 phone calls and 68 emails containing negative feedback.

Despite this, some of Bush's most fervent and active supporters are still keen to bring the issue to the fore. Conservative Christians, who used to exert pressure from outside, now form an influential base within the party. Today they exercise either "strong" or "moderate" influence in 44 Republican state committees, compared with 31 in 1994, according to a study in Washington magazine Campaigns and Elections. The man who used to run the Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed, is now the head of the Georgia Republican party.

The conservative right have been increasingly irritated with what they regard as Bush's ambivalent attitude towards gay rights. After Marc Racicot, the Republican national chairman, met with the HRC, Connor asked whether he was fit to run Bush's campaign, claiming he was "out of touch with Bush's most loyal and committed voters".

Whether the evangelical right can deliver on their threats is another matter. As fundamentalists, compromise does not come easily to conservative Christians - particularly on social issues. But with Bush enjoying more than 90% approval ratings among Republicans, the president could call their bluff. He knows they won't vote Democrat, though he fears they might stay at home.

And even if Bush could persuade his own side to bury the subject, the courts could resurrect it. A supreme court ruling on a law in Texas which criminalizes sexual practices between same-sex couples that are lawful when performed by heterosexuals, is expected by the end of today. The Massachusetts supreme court should rule on the legality of same-sex marriages by mid-July.

The most that conservatives can hope from either judgment is a confirmation of the status quo. More likely, however, is that one or both will extend the rights of lesbians and gay men, sending the Christian right into a frenzy and demanding that Bush make a stand. Under pressure from his own side he would be forced to show us where the conservatism ends and compassion really starts.

U.S. INTERESTS IN CASTRO'S CRACKDOWN

by Alana Y. Price

Just as alarming as Castro's recent crackdown on Cuban dissents is the agenda behind Washington's inflammatory treatment of the incident. Since the incarceration of the dissidents, the Bush administration has worked overtime to present a warped overview of events leading up to the detentions.

Last month, Bush declared, "Dictatorships have no place in the Americas. May God bless the Cuban people, who are struggling for freedom." What he failed to mention is that, for decades, Washington has consistently stifled Cuba's struggle for freedom and full sovereignty. For an entire era, U.S.-sponsored, rightist dictators—such as Fulgencio Batista—sanctioned political executions and repression on the island. The U.S. continues to violate Cuba's right to exist by maintaining a unilateral embargo that it alone sustains.

It is clear that the Bush administration orchestrated a series of provocations to lure Castro to overreact and crack down on island dissidents. Since the State Department sent James Cason to serve as head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana last September, the U.S. diplomat tirelessly has organized and provided supplies to island dissidents—actions that no self-respecting government could tolerate from a country committed to destroying it.

Washington's goading of Castro's paranoia with threats against his revolution does not absolve the Cuban president of responsibility for his harsh actions. However, Castro's decision to jail 80 suspected dissidents—and consequently to alienate an increasingly supportive European community, as well as forfeit Cuba's chance of soon joining the EU's Cotonou Agreement for preferential trade benefits—reflects a genuine fear on Castro's part that Cason's strategic liaisons with dissidents could herald another "regime change" operation by Washington. Given the Bush administration's passion to transform a resented socialist Cuba into a Miami-led capitalist dependency, Castro's internationally condemned wave of arrests was undoubtedly the intended effect of Cason's unprecedented role as tempter.

Castro's imprisonment of the dissidents is condemnable. However, it is also wrong to distort the context of the "crackdown" in order to rally support for Bush's aim to oust the Cuban leader from power and to reverse the erosion of support in the U.S. for the increasingly unpopular embargo. Similarly, a recent AP story quotes Ana Lázara Rodriguez, who spent 19 years following the 1959 revolution in Cuban prisons and now lives in the U.S., as saying, "we have been beaten, confined…those things continue happening in Cuba." But AP got it wrong. How can a memory of a jail experience from the 1960s and '70s serve as a reliable verdict on current Cuban prison conditions? Even the Cuban-American National Foundation, a virulently anti-Castro group, acknowledges that of the recent detainees, "none have complained of mistreatment." As the U.S. denounces Castro's recent imprisonment of dissidents, it must be carefully noted that the international commu-

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nity accuses Cuba of imprisoning dissenters; not of beatings or mass executions.

The AP is not the only source for skewed treatment of the Cuba story. At a screening for government officials in Washington, on May 20, Miami University's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies presented "Presidio—The Trip Back," a documentary filmed in 1998 by producer Rafael Lima. The documentary merges images of vacant prisons with the sounds of gunfire, while Lima narrates how his father and uncles were imprisoned on death row in the 1960s, having been charged by Castro authorities with the bombing of Santa Clara. While respecting the horrific experiences that Lima must have endured as a child, one must still keep an eye on the film's political mission, which was made fully evident at its recent Rayburn House Office Building showing. Considering the way that he merged accounts of imprisonments and executions that occurred throughout 18th century Spanish rule, and during the transition from Batista to the Castro government, along with limited, more recent footage, some in the audience probably left thinking that the dissidents are currently being starved, tortured, and summarily executed.

Sensationalizing Castro's crackdown to justify more aggressive meddling in Cuban affairs will not help to "free the people of Cuba." If Washington truly valued Cuban freedom, it would stop using economic sanctions and political connivance to bully Cuba into submitting to the U.S.'s global reach. Although many Cubans express a craving for greater freedom of expression, most of them also communicate a desire to reform their society from within, free from U.S. intrusion.

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The Council on Hemispheric Affairs, founded in 1975, is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt research and information organization. It has been described on the Senate floor as being "one of the nation's most respected bodies of scholars and policy makers."

WHY THE US NEEDS THIS COURT

America's Rejection of the International Criminal Court is a Threat to its Own Security

by Steve Crawshaw
Published by the Observer/UK

First, the good news, which deserves to be savored for a moment. The inauguration in the Hague tomorrow of the first chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court marks a remarkable moment in history. Dictators and tyrants around the world can be brought to book, by a single court. It is an astonishing achievement - and one that seemed, until just a few years ago, quite unimaginable.

Even after the signing in 1998 of the Rome Treaty, which laid the foundations for the new court, many believed that the ICC would never become real. They were wrong. Last year, the number of countries ratifying the treaty reached 60, thus allowing the court itself to be created.

The prosecutor and judges have been selected. Now, to crown that process, the inauguration tomorrow of Luis Moreno Ocampo - a former prosecutor of the Argentine junta - means that the ICC show is well and truly on the road. Last July, when the court was constituted as a formal entity, it remained without practical power. From tomorrow, its power will be tangible. The court will be authorized to prosecute some of the horrific crimes now being committed around the world - for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which may provide the first cases.

Ninety countries, including almost all the world's major democracies, have now ratified the treaty. But not the United States - which is where the problems begin. Those problems are increasing by the month and by the day. The US administration, not content with refusing to ratify, and then 'unsigning' the treaty (a murky legal concept, at best), seeks to prevent this crucial instrument of international justice from building up the strength it needs to do its work successfully. It is, in short, doing its level best to kill the court. (The 'Hague invasion clause', signed into law by President Bush last year, allows him to use 'all means necessary and appropriate' to free US servicemen detained by the ICC.)

In recent days, there have been small glimmers of light. A vote in the Security Council last Thursday was 12-0 in favor of a renewal of a special one-year deal that was agreed last July, allowing US peacekeepers immunity from prosecution. That sounds like another victory for the US hawks. But equally significant were the diplomatic dogs that refused to bark: France and Germany both withheld their vote, because they were so unhappy at the US pressures. Nor was this just the same old post-Iraq rift. Kofi Annan himself warned that the court - and the Security Council - would be undermined, if such renewals became an annual routine. Many countries - from Switzerland to South Africa - spoke out against the idea that the Security Council should start rewriting international treaties.

The US pressures at the United Nations have been only part of the story. The bully tactics against countries which defy America by refusing to weaken their commitment to the court have become blatant in recent months, as private (and much-denied) arm-twisting has given way to public threats. Countries vulnerable to American pressure - these days, the list of such countries is long - are told that unless they offer the Americans the desired immunity from prosecution, punishment will be swift and severe. Thus, the US ambassador to Zagreb recently published an open letter warning that Croatia would lose $19 million in military assistance if it failed to sign. Other countries have received similar threats; some - like the Bosnians, who, one might think, had already suffered more than their fair share of threats and ultimatums in recent years - have reluctantly surrendered.

The irony is obvious: that Washington simultaneously demands complete co-operation with international justice at the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal (or else), and complete non-co-operation with international justice at the ICC (or else). Elsewhere, Caribbean countries have been told that they will no longer be eligible for hurricane assistance unless they give the Americans what they want, right now. Like every practiced bully, Washington has given an early date for the implementation of its threats. For many countries, the proclaimed deadline for kowtowing to the US pressures runs out on 1 July, the first anniversary of the court itself.

The American view of the court, described by the deputy US ambassador to the UN as 'a fatally flawed institution', is that the court will act as a giant conspiracy against America. Accordingly, Americans will be unfairly targeted. But this misunderstands the essence of the court. The ICC is a court of last resort, which prosecutes only the most serious war crimes and crimes against humanity, and comes into play only where domestic courts have shown themselves unwilling or unable to prosecute. Despite the depressing and dangerous insouciance about international law shown by America at Guantanamo and elsewhere, one would assume that US politicians and commanders are not eager to commit atrocities on a grand scale, à la Saddam or Milosevic, which could bring them before the ICC.

As Kofi Annan pointed out, no UN peacekeeper of any nationality has been accused of a crime 'anywhere near the crimes that fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC'. The Americans may be right to fear that there will be attempts to bring politically motivated cases. But the court has a solid panoply of safeguards, which make it difficult to imagine that malicious and frivolous cases could get past judicial first base.

Britain, which played a key role during the negotiations of the Rome treaty five years ago, has in recent months played a less dignified role - constantly eager to tweak the European diplomatic language in order (unsuccessfully) to appease the US loathing of the court. The UK has been depressingly reluctant to confront Washington's bully tactics, confining itself instead to occasional hand wringing expressions of regret. And yet, almost no issue can be of greater importance. The strength of the ICC - which does not have retrospective jurisdiction beyond July 2002 - can become an international guarantor of stability in the years to come.

American contempt for the court - and its determination to bring the court's supporters to heel - sends a disastrous message worldwide. It suggests that there is one standard of justice for Americans and another for everybody else. Such haughty foolishness makes the world a less safe place - for Americans too.

Steve Crawshaw is London director of Human Rights Watch.

Media Alliance, Clear Channel, and the FCC

Media Alliance, a San Francisco-based non-profit, was founded in 1976 by a group of progressive journalists who recognized a need for media reform. Disturbed by the lack of diversity and the quality of reporting they encountered in corporate newsrooms, the founders came together with the goal of fostering media in the interests of peace, justice, and social responsibility. Since last year, the Media Alliance has been an instrumental member of a broad-based coalition to challenge the FCC's June 2 ruling, which loosened important restrictions on corporate control of television, newspapers, and radio. While the coalition did not succeed in blocking most of the sweeping and dangerous changes proposed by the FCC, it had phenomenal success in raising community awareness about media ownership issues.

Jeff Perlstein is a media activist who co-founded Seattle's Indy Media Center before moving to San Francisco. He has been the executive director of Media Alliance for a little over a year and a half.

Interview by Arwen Curry and Erin Yanke

MRR: Give us a sense of Media Alliance's historical role in community life and social justice issues.

Jeff: Over time, it became clear that in order to talk about fostering media in the interests of peace and social justice, we needed to look at structural transformation of our media systems. It was going to take more than organizing progressive journalists in order to advance social justice issues—there were a lot of needs around media in local—especially underrepresented—communities, that had to engage a lot more folks than just people that had gone to journalism school. There are a lot of different ways that Media Alliance has worked to advance those goals over time. One is supporting local community-based organizations and non-profits in doing their media work. We also clearly recognize that we can't just challenge the existing media structures; we have to at the same time foster the kind of media we *do* want. That's why we really have an emphasis on supporting alternative and independent media, especially community-driven media. For example, Media Alliance played a really crucial role in organizing to reclaim KPFA, the oldest listener-supported station in the country, and kind of the founding station in the Pacifica Network, which is the biggest progressive network for news and information in the US.

MRR: And the old home to MRR Radio.

Jeff: There you go. So Media Alliance was really involved in organizing folks to reclaim the station—not just to reclaim it, but actually to transform even the station itself, to include participation from communities who've been underrepresented even at that institution. So that work continues over at KPFA, and then we worked to take that to the next level with the Pacifica Network, nationally. But we've also supported community institutions like the *SF Bayview* paper—one of the best, I would say, African-American papers in the country, and a really crucial voice for that community here in San Francisco. We've worked with KPOO radio for a little bit, and we helped incubate and birth SF Independent Media Center, because we felt that was an important model for using new media and networking old media, and also for giving folks direct access to the means to tell their own stories, in their own voices. We also work on media accountability and media policy. We've tried to develop strategies that link the two, holding corporate media outlets and even some progressive outlets accountable for their coverage.

We have been really involved in the FCC rulings around media ownership, because we feel like that's going to impact communities all across the country, and here locally. In order to meet the needs of community-based organizations and local groups, we offer classes and trainings so they can do their media work. But that's also strategic, as well—not just in them doing their work, but also in broadening the base of folks involved in media policy. That establishes a relationship between them and Media Alliance, and then they're more interested in working on an FCC ruling that may not really be on their radar screen, for example. We have about 1800 individual members, including about half professional media workers, and then we have about 47 non-profits that are members as well.

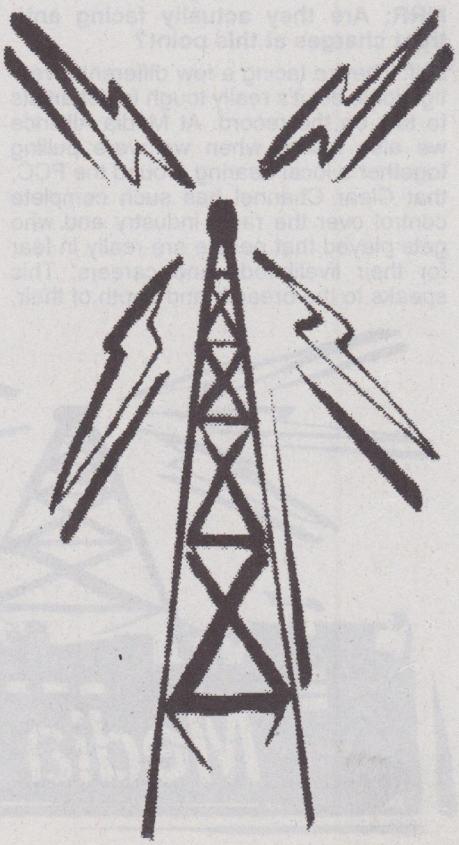
MRR: Can you explain the function the FCC?

Jeff: The Federal Communications Commission is responsible for media policy in the States, especially over our airwaves—which the public owns. The FCC is the regulatory body that's supposed to make policy in the public interest with those public resources. Of course, the reality is in most cases they've ruled in corporate interests, because they're lobbied so hard. They're what is called a "captive agency" in many ways, which means they're captive to the whims of corporations and politicians, etc.

MRR: But ostensibly, they're there to protect the public airwaves.

Jeff: That's their mandate. Michael Powell is the chair of the FCC. On September 12, he announced the latest ruling, which was part of a biennial review mandated by a law in 1996 that Congress moved forward to examine corporate media ownership, especially cross-ownership. There were actually six rules they were looking at that had to do with big corporations. For example, there's a long-standing rule that kept them from owning a major newspaper and a major television station in the same city, another that kept them from owning above a certain percentage of television outlets, and another that kept them from owning a TV and a radio station in the same city—the concern being that if you have too few people owning too much of the media, that will affect the diversity of viewpoints. We've actually seen that to be the case—there are a lot of studies that demonstrate that diversity of ownership is crucial to diversity of opinions and voices. That said, Powell has been very clear that he believes the free market ideology should rule, meaning that there really shouldn't be restrictions on corporations, and that they'll do what's in the best interest of the public because that's what's good for their bottom line. Of course, we've seen deregulation fail in pretty much every area, whether it's the airlines, or obviously energy, as we saw with Enron, and on and on and on.

MRR: How does the radio deregulation in 1996, and Clear Channel, figure in to this?



Jeff: Clear Channel is the clearest example of the ills of deregulation, as far as the negative impacts of rapid media consolidation. Before the 1996 Telecommunications Act I mentioned earlier, no company could own more than 40 radio stations in the whole country. Under intense lobbying by corporate media and the National Association of Broadcasters —which is kind of the NRA for corporate media—the Congress did away with any national ownership limits. They kept in place local ownership limits, meaning that, for example, in big cities, a company is only allowed to own up to eight stations and in smaller markets, up to six. Soon after the rule, Clear Channel started to buy up stations, and other networks of stations as well, to the point where now they own over 1200 stations—30 times what they owned just six years ago. They own about five times more than the next big company, which is Viacom/CBS/Infinity. What's made Clear Channel really the poster child for deregulation and why it's bad is the way they've wielded their clout and their size, and also their ownership of and dominance of concert industries and concert promotions in the US. They actually control the programming of a great majority of the concert venues throughout the whole country. They've used their dominance of radio and the concert industries in a kind of "negative synergy," meaning that they've forced artists to "pay or play," essentially. Unless you're a really big artist and your record company is going to shell out lots of bucks for advertising on these stations, it's very difficult to get into rotation through this process that they've set up. Similarly, it's very difficult to play at a concert venue.

MRR: Are they actually facing anti-trust charges at this point?

Jeff: They're facing a few different investigations, but it's really tough to get artists to talk on the record. At Media Alliance we also found, when we were pulling together a local hearing around the FCC, that Clear Channel has such complete control over the radio industry and who gets played that people are really in fear for their livelihoods and careers. This speaks to the breadth and depth of their control of this industry, and also how stifling it is for creativity and diversity of voices. Not to mention that Clear Channel has a very conservative political agenda, and they have not been shy about using their vast network—with radio stations in about 110 of the 112 major markets—to project that conservative ideology. So not only do they distribute Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura as talk show syndication, they also banned some songs after 9/11, controversial songs like "Imagine" by John Lennon and "Peace Train" by Cat Stevens. Then recently, there was a ban on Dixie Chicks songs because they were audacious enough to make a comment that they didn't completely agree with the president of the United States. One of Clear Channel's DJs was helping convene these pro-war rallies around the country, which is completely unprecedented—for any media outlet to take leadership in that sort of way on a political issue. One thing I think isn't widely known is that the CEO of Clear Channel, Lowry Mays, is quite good friends with the older George Bush. They go back a long ways. The business school at the University of Texas is named Lowry Mays School—Clear Channel is based out of San Antonio—and his sons are the other execs at the company. He's a huge supporter of the Republican National Committee, the conservative wing of the party. Last fall, during the last Congressional election, the ban on soft money also went into effect, that day. Lowry Mays had a massive benefit at his home featuring Rush Limbaugh and raising, I believe, over $3 million for the RNC, just two days before the ban went into effect. That's a real clear statement of what the political agenda is there.

MRR: And there's another issue as well—there are supposedly only 800 Clear Channel employees and 1200 stations. There was an incident in Minot, North Dakota, where there was a toxic spill from a truck and people attempted to contact an emergency broadcast at one of the eight local stations, but they were all owned by Clear Channel and no DJs could be reached. About 300 people were hospitalized because there was no broadcast to the community. That example speaks to the fact the radio stations are no longer representing either the cultural flavor or the practical concerns of the communities they are broadcast to.

Jeff: That's absolutely right. What Clear Channel has done is used the idea of economy of scale to boost their profits—so they've bought tons of stations, and when they buy a station in a locality they'll fire more than half the staff immediately, put the rest of them all in one warehouse, use the same sound engineer for all eight stations, for example. More significantly than that is the actual on-air content of programming, which often is broadcast from a central location that is nowhere near the station. They pioneered the practice of "voice tracking," which has come under severe criticism, and for good reason—essentially it pipes in information and programming from some place in Topeka or San Antonio to upwards of 70 stations all getting the same feed, with these little dropped-in inserts saying "Hi Topeka!" "Good morning San Francisco!" which they do with computers in a very sophisticated way, using this system they generated called Prophet Systems. That's a clear demonstration that their concern and commitment to local programming is not there. That certainly should be of concern to anyone who is concerned a bout a healthy, robust, diverse media landscape. But it's also counter to the FCC's mandate, which says they're supposed to do this in the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

MRR (Erin): I was curious about the dissension of the two people who did the hearings—if that lays groundwork for fighting it. How much is it really a commission, and how much is it just Michael Powell? It doesn't seem like he is accountable to anyone.

Jeff: It's one of the challenges that the FCC has structurally. To his credit, Powell raised this during the hearing on the vote, saying that the FCC was specifically created to not be at the whims of Congress, so media policy would not be wrangled over in Congress, in terms of appropriations going back and forth and people attaching all sorts of riders to it. Having said that, it's always appointed with a three-to-two majority by the president's party, so it ends up splitting along party lines. It was intended that they wouldn't be influenced by lobbyists and that sort of thing, but a study by a group back east found that the commission was visited 71 times by owners of major media networks

in the last six months, and it certainly would have been difficult, for example, for Media Alliance to get an appointment with the commissioners, so I think it's a real question of who are they listening to.

MRR: Ironically, it seems that there wasn't a lot of coverage, both before June and currently, about this in the media, even the smaller newspapers and stations. Or if there was, there was not a lot of follow-up or editorializing. Why is that?

Jeff: As a group who was working on the ruling, trying to foster greater public awareness and mobilize the public to get involved in the hearings and this process, we had an incredibly difficult time breaking through to the mainstream media. It's important to note that it wasn't for a lack of trying. We're part of a coalition of about twelve groups nationally that have been working since September, pitching our local media outlets and national media outlets with all sorts of angles, trying all sorts of stuff to begin a discussion around the issue. That was impossible. There was no success, frankly. That's partly why we had to work to develop some creative strategies to try to break through that corporate media blockade. Ultimately, we were successful; the story did get through, but unfortunately, it was too little too late.

The short answer as to why that is quite clear—most of these companies had something to gain by this ruling going through and not drawing lots of public or congressional attention to it. For example, the Chronicle, the paper of record here in the Bay Area, is owned by the Hearst Corporation, who certainly has an interest in having the opportunity to buy a TV station as well to augment their media network—media empire, I would say—so that they can share content, reach a broader audience, cross-promote, etc. And we saw this across the country—one of the rules being considered was about the networks having more reach, raising the potential for the reach from 35% of US households to 45% So is it in the interest of ABC, NBC, and CBS to report on that critically? Probably not, if you're just talking about their bottom line.

MRR: Explain the process of bringing the FCC vote to the public attention, and the FCC's resistance to public input along the way.

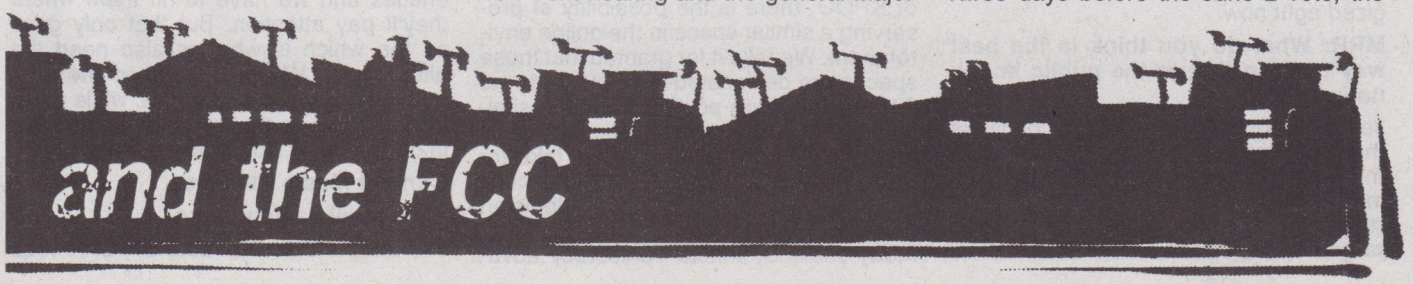
While the vote did go through, there was unprecedented attention, in the last month or so, to this issue. Media policy is not a very sexy topic. It's pretty arcane, and it's mostly just resolved inside the Beltway, so it's hard to get much coverage on it generally. But we were finally able to break through about three weeks before the vote. That was in part due to the fact that the ruling could be so devastating to our democracy, potentially, and also because the situation with the media is so bad right now. There's such widespread concern over what's going on with our media—not just in progressive circles, but across the board. The coverage of the war against Iraq certainly ramped up the engagement in activism by progressive people, but the coalition engaged in this is quite broad, including the NRA and some of the Moral Majority people.

With the media diversity coalition that we helped form back in September, our first strategy was to try to get lots of public comments as part of the FCC's process and to use the hopeful deluge of them to make the case for lots of public hearings and also congressional attention to the matter. First the Chairman begrudgingly agreed to extend the public comment period for another month because there hadn't really been sufficient notice for it, and then we were able, through different networks, to flood them with about 18,000 comments, which were 99% against any further deregulation. The fact that the Commission kept to its course despite this response really calls into question how genuinely they are considering this public input. It smacks of the president saying, "I'm not going to rule by focus group," when millions of people are expressing their concern against the war.

Further demonstrating the chairman's disregard for what the public really is experiencing is the fact that he only allowed one public hearing on the issue as part of a nine-month process, and that was in Richmond, Virginia, which certainly didn't allow for very broad public participation. He was getting requests from groups and individuals all around the country, including ourselves, because we felt like the Bay Area, being the fifth largest market in the most diverse state in the country, should have a say in such a sweeping policy issue. To the credit of the two Democrats on the commission—there are five FCC commissioners, two Democrats and three Republicans—they recognized the need for much broader input, and actually spent a good deal of time going to more than twelve cities around the country to convene unprecedented local hearings, to get local input not just from the citizenry, but also from people who own media outlets. The president of ABC and CBS testified at the New York hearing and the general major of a major TV station testified here in the Bay Area, in addition to folks who are media workers, members of different unions, schoolteachers, from different civil and human rights organizations, etc. This is the sort of work that the FCC is supposed to be doing, engaging public input and concern, yet the chairman clearly wasn't interested in that sort of input. At the San Francisco hearing we helped convene at City Hall here, Commissioner Adelstein, one of the Democrats on the commission, said he had been to about six hearings and during the public comment period, had not heard one person stand up and say they wanted more consolidation in our media.

We also had to make the case to members of industry, citizens groups, and consumers' rights groups that we needed to have the hearings. The hearings helped, I think, break through the media blockade. We were able to get local coverage through some of the smaller outlets, that weren't controlled by the national conglomerates, to cover the issue, and then to use a sort of ripple-up strategy—we said, the *SF Bay Guardian* covered it, the *SF Weekly* covered it, why isn't the *SF Chronicle* covering it? And we flooded them with emails and phone calls. Notably, while we were the seventh hearing in the series of twelve-plus, we were the first to be able to break the story to the front page of a major paper, the *Chronicle.* That was through very concerted work; we hired a professional PR person, we were pitching them constantly and mobilizing people to call them; we were able to get an op ed by Commissioner Adelstein printed to get the word out. Then we used the fact that it had broken through to the front page in the number five market to re-pitch all the national media. Within a week *The New York Times, The Washington Post,* and ABC News all had front page or front section coverage.

That's a huge success for a very small, under-funded group, fighting against such huge corporate interests. On the flipside, of course, that was like three weeks before the vote, and it's really tough to build momentum. But then we were able to contact some of the organizations nationally that have a larger membership base, so we pitched MoveOn.org, for example, saying this is an issue your people really should care about, and I'm sure that they do, if they just knew about it. We partnered with Move On and a few other groups, and through their networks, within a week, they had 170,000 people sending letters to their congresspeople and the FCC. Three days before the June 2 vote, the



Media Alliance (cont.)

FCC servers were handling so many comments that they actually crashed, and it was registered that they received over 500,000 comments and phone calls, including to Congress.

So what did it all mean? One success is that there are a whole lot more people who are identifying media policy as a crucial issue. That's one thing we've been working on for years and actually explicitly stated last year—that we weren't very confident that we could derail this ruling, because Powell has this 3-2 majority and he's made it the centerpiece of his time there, but that we were seeking to use it to make media the number two issue for people. So peace and justice activists shouldn't stop fighting the war, but they have to recognize that changing the media is part of that. People working on fighting an incinerator in their neighborhood shouldn't stop doing that crucial work, but they should recognize that media is a strategic leverage point, and that we need to transform the media system if we're going to transform all of this work. So I think that's a big success, the concern and interest and follow-up we're seeing across the board.

The interest in keeping the pressure on the FCC and pushing Congress to overturn the ruling is really an unprecedented sort of energy and momentum. That's had some impact, because two days after the vote, there was a Congressional hearing calling the five FCC commissioners, essentially to grill them on why they voted this way even thought there was such broad public opinion against it. This is important because Congress has oversight of the FCC—the Senate and the House Commerce Committees do. We've also seen a bunch more sponsors sign on just in the eleven days since the vote for a bill that had been kind of languishing by Senator Feingold, which is a really important bill called the Competition in Radio and Concert Industries Act, which is specifically targeted at Clear Channel—it doesn't mention their name but it's focused on their practices. He had been really hurting for supporters and co-sponsors, but that's really picked up. Also this month, the anti-trust subcommittees are going to meet and look at anti-competitive practices in broadcast media, and according to their rhetoric it they will be really vocal about scrutinizing any mergers that happen, especially soon after this ruling. I'm encouraged by the fact that the base of people that are really thinking about the need for media change is incredibly expanded and really energized right now.

MRR: What do you think is the best way to keep that in the public imagination?

Jeff: I think it's really tough, because these big votes come up very rarely, and there are so many things we're all dealing with in our daily lives. So I think it's really crucial for us to focus on specific targets people can wrap their minds around, that mean something to them in their daily lives. One thing we'll be focusing on as well is Internet policy and the role of the cable companies. There's concern about the consolidation of the old media, but there's pretty broad recognition that the Internet is the most robust and democratic space for exchange of ideas and information—but we also know that the big companies that have spent so much energy controlling the old media are not going to leave the Internet alone. Of course, they're already making inroads to control and privatize not only people's access to the pipes, but to dominate the space online. This has potentially devastating implications for this key, crucial space. So while we're going to fight to diversify the old media, we're also going to fight to preserve and expand space in the new media.

MRR: What are the implications for the independent press or radio stations?

Jeff: From what I've seen over time, whenever power from above begins to exert more pressure on people in a less democratic way, resistance grows, and we've seen that all around the world. I think resistance media is part and parcel of that—of the flourishing of people's local concerns and voices, and of very creative manifestations of that. Having said that, the consolidation of more and more outlets by fewer and fewer people also puts economic pressure on folks, so it makes it tougher on some of the smaller projects to get by, and the unraveling of our social fabric makes it tough for folks to spend time and energy on this, but I'm really encouraged by the energy and creativity I'm seeing.

MRR (Erin): I was interested in knowing about the micro radio regulation.

Jeff: Media Alliance is pretty involved with getting Low Power FM to be somewhat accepted, and that was actually one of our recommendations...one of the questions, besides saying we don't want you to deregulate further, is to say what do we want, proactively? What would diversify the radio dial? So one of the platforms we are moving forward is a push for expansion of LPFM licenses, because right now as you may know while there were some granted, they basically defanged it, and said they would only be in rural areas. No urban area in the country has gotten an LPFM license, though their argument around it was completely specious and fabricated. There's plenty of room on the dial, especially with new technologies. This may be one of the openings that are presented by all this. Also, in the way there's space set aside for non-commercial stations like KBOO or KPOO, there is the possibility of preserving a similar space in the online environment. We take it for granted that those spaces are designated now, but that was the result of long political struggle, similarly with PBS, as problematic as that is. There are other models that we take for granted somewhat, with cable access and ITVS, an independent television service which was fought for for many, many years by media democracy advocates because there was a sense that PBS wasn't meeting the need (which was quite clear) in the diversity of viewpoints.

MRR (Erin): LPFM was something that occurred to me with Congress getting more involved—it makes sense out of the context of the FCC. Here's something you can easily hook on to without knowing anything about media politics as a solution.

Jeff: I think it fits into the logic really well. We'll see. There are actually about 500 stations that have gotten licenses since that ruling went through. The best resource for that is Prometheus Radio Project. They have this great thing where they do these regional barn-raising tours. They'll spend two weeks traveling through the Southeast, teaching workshops along the way and inviting people to the barn-raising, where they actually building the station and the transmitter with everybody, and by the end of the week, the station is up on the air.

MRR: So what should the punk kid in some little town do to ensure that there's a place where they can have a voice?

Jeff: I think people should always get involved in seeking out and supporting independent media that resonates and makes sense to them. As far as challenging the corporate media, I think that's something we can't give up. There are some exciting models growing right now. One is this campaign here in the Bay Area that we've worked with Youth Media Council, on documenting the coverage by one of the Clear Channel stations, KMEL, which is the number one hip hop and R&B station in the Bay Area. We worked with them for three weeks to have the youth organizers who make up their media council, twelve youth-led organizations, monitor their coverage and how that station is talking about young people. Who was the station blaming when it discusses issues of violence? Is it discussing issues of racism, sexism, social inequities? For the most part it wasn't. We all came together with other groups and issued this report publicly, had a press conference, and have had a series of meetings with Clear Channel management. I can't tell you how powerful it was to go into this meeting with these suits from Clear Channel and fourteen youth organizers from around the Bay Area, mostly young people of color, who were fierce and were making very clear and specific suggestions and demands. Then there's the Turn Off the Radio program in New York, which is a similar program. These are economic entities and we have to hit them where they'll pay attention. But that only goes so far, which is why we also need the alternatives. We have to keep the dam from bursting and flooding us, while we're also building up the world we want to live in on the other side of the dam.

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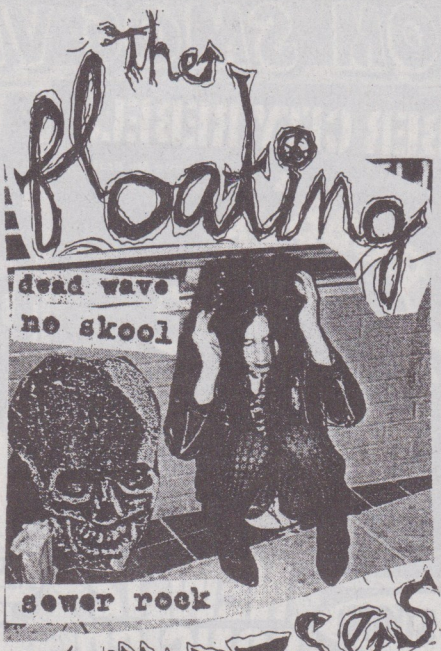

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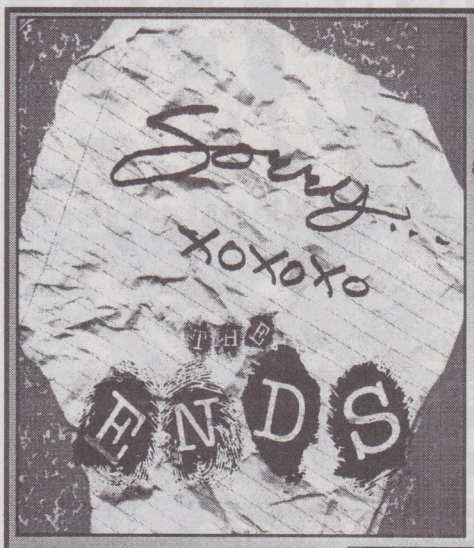

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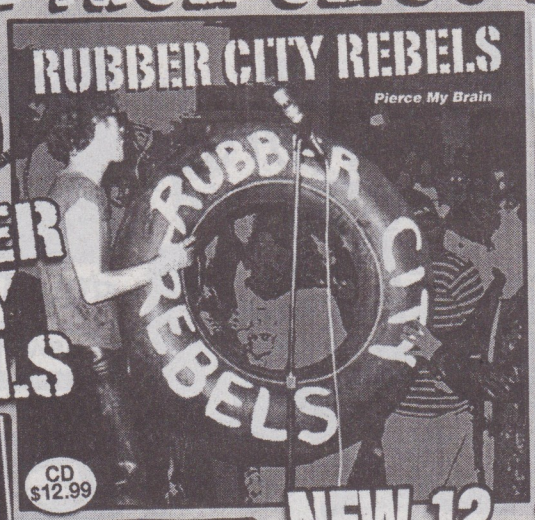

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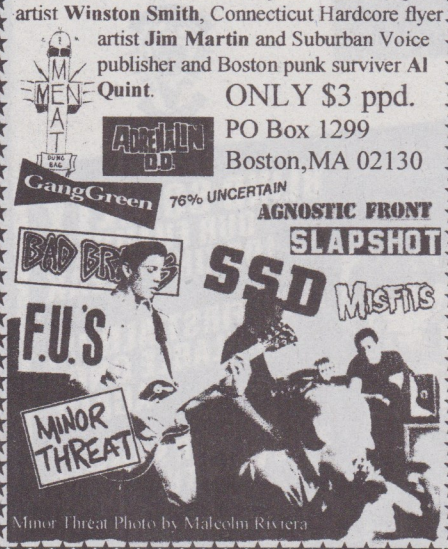

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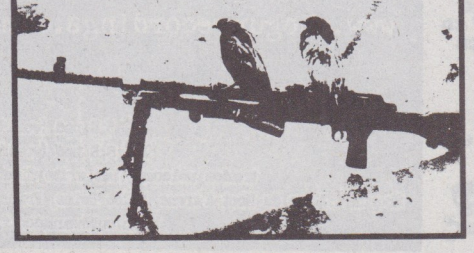

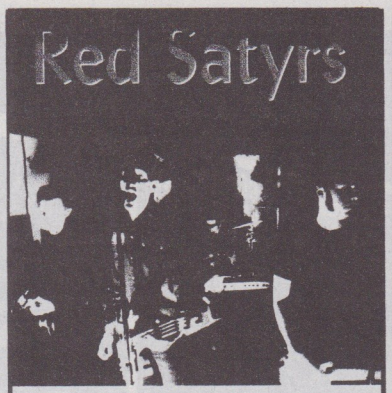

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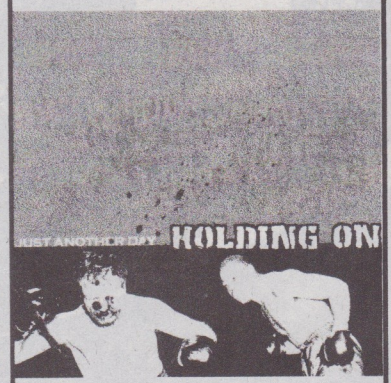

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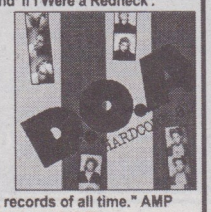

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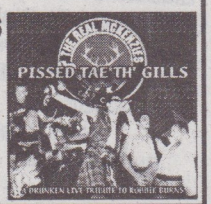

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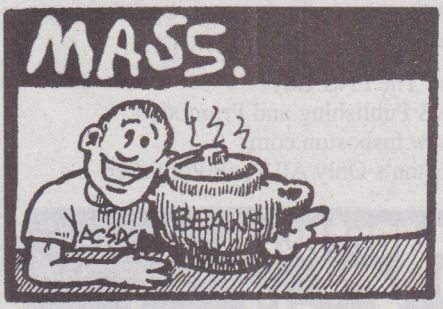

Boston, lately, has been living up to its reputation as a serious punk rock breeding ground. Our scene is probably seeing its biggest activity since the early 90s, which spawned lots of great bands like the Ducky Boys, The Unseen, Showcase Showdown, and Toxic Narcotic. Speaking of **TOXIC NARCOTIC**, the ten-plus-year band is still playing shows even though they are looking for a new drummer. They have been using Rich (who is also the drummer for the Profits) as a fill-in and are seeking a drummer for touring, but not for recording. They will still be using their old drummer Sam for all studio work in the future. Toxic's singer Bill is staying busy with his homegrown hardcore punk label **Rodent Popsicle Records**. The label, which is run in true punk rock fashion, has a shitload of new releases, including the new **TOMMY AND THE TERRORS** CD *13 the Hard Way*, a full length CD from Cleveland's **ALLERGIC TO WHORES,** and a CDEP from local horror punks **MOURNINGSIDE**.

Currently there is no all ages venue in Boston. The **Regeneration** crew is still trying to find a new location after being ousted last year for fire code violations. Sue Catwomen, Paul Russo (from The Unseen), and Ross Noyes make up the organization, which is seeking to open a new venue ASAP. Constant benefits and fundraisers are keeping the bank account afloat until a new spot can be found. This fall, my publishing company, **FNS Publishing,** will be putting out a full-size magazine filled with cool local punk rock tour diaries to raise money for the club, which will host shows, workshops, and an extensive zine library.

Just before their first tour of the summer, local Oi Oi punk rockers **A GLOBAL THREAT**, who have a new 7" out called *Earache* (on RP Records) played the local Davis Sq. VFW hall. Also on the bill was **EARTH DIED SCREAMING** (ex-Class Action) who I think are a little too metal, **THE PROFITS,** who are on their summer tour, **STATE CONTROL,** a new street punk studs-and-mohawk outfit, and **CLIT 45,** a long overlooked local street punk band who will join A Global Threat on their tour. Lots of dancing and underage drinking was had by all.

Because so many bands have been playing outside of the city, lots of suburban kids have been exposed to inner city style music, and in turn lots of great young bands have been popping up in everywhere. Haverhill, a northern suburb, has lots of cool young bands. **CHANTICLEER** is a four-piece punk rock 'n' roll outfit from Haverhill that has just re-released their demo CD on local record label, **Overlook Records**. Joey Riot (the singer) and Joe Zippo (the bass player) also play in the redneck punk band **ZIPPO RAID,** who also just released a new CD, *Punk is in Season*, that was recorded with the legendary Jim Siegal (Slapshot, Blood for Blood) at the Outpost in Stoughton. Their neighbors **THE KNOX** are a couple of juvenile delinquents that play Discharge-style sing-along street punk. They just self released their first demo CD, *Decked for War*. It's kind of a hike, but Haverhill's **Exit 23** is a great DIY, all-ages, drug-free, booze-free club to see up-and-coming punk, hardcore, oi, and metal bands without some drunk fuck spilling his drink all over me. Jeremy, the owner, also has a 16-track recording studio called **Son of The 7th** that is only $15 an hour.

Worcester is about 30 minutes from Boston and has its share of great bands. My favorite is the sophomoric **A-TEAM**. When I played in a band near Worcester, (Victim 21), one of our choices for a band name was the A-Team. Despite possibly being band-name thieves, the A-Team is great. The traditional hardcore-sounding group put out a mildly successful LP, *A is for Asshole*, last year on **Stab To Kill Records,** and just recently put out a new single, *Clusterfuck*, on local Worcester label **Heroin(e) Records**. At the time of this report they are also on tour.

I know this is supposed to be Massachusetts scene report, but it would be grossly incomplete to not include some great New Hampshire bands that come down from "the mountains" and play some wicked shows. For more than 20 years, **THE JONEE EARTHQUAKE BAND** from Manchester has played incredible pirate punk, while supporting other "new" bands from New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Jonee, the elder of the band, has talked with me about how GG Allin was going to try out as his drummer in the early 80s, but at the last minute decided to become a singer for a band called...the **JABBERS**. The Jabbers, who occasionally reunite for one or two shows, will be playing the Littleton Opera House in Littleton, New Hampshire. Littleton is GG's hometown and will host a 10th anniversary show celebrating his death on June 28th. On the bill will be the Jabbers, GG's broth-

er's band the **MURDER JUNKIES**, The Jonee Earthquake Band, and my least favorite Ramones rip-off band, the **RYDELLS**. It should be a dangerous show.

The **GUTS,** from my hometown of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, have put out two CDs in the past few months. Their newest, *Say Goodbye To Fun*, was released by **Spiderbite Records**, a New Hampshire label run by the owners of the Bull Moose record stores. They have a bunch of bands on their roster, including **SATAN'S TEARDROPS**, who have a split 7" with **THE PHOTON TORPEDOES**, and **THEE MONKEY BUTLERS**, whose album is in the works. I also have to give credit to **THE DOWNTRODDEN**, another New Hampshire band who have been playing lots and lots of shows and getting better every time I see them. They sort of run from traditional rockabilly to punk rock and back again.

In the city, there are only a few venues that are punk-accessible. **THE CHOPPING BLOCK** is popular because even if you're not good, they will still bring you back. With cheap drinks and one-of-a-kind Norman

Rockwell sketches on its walls, The Choppin' Block is an interesting venue that is located at the bottom of Mission Hill, a popular punk rock/college student neighborhood. Even though it is 21+, most bands prefer to play there instead of washed up 18+ venues like TT The Bears and The Middle East. They also host all-day punk shows. For $10 you can see ten or more up and coming punk bands like **NOBODY'S HEROES**, **12CENT**, **NOT AT ALL**, and the **DEAD PEDESTRIANS**.

The Middle East, after years of delay, has finally opened its doors for afternoon matinees. Personally, I think the club sucks, and I only go if there is something extraordinary on the bill. However, Kristen of **Mad Cat Productions** is in charge and puts together great shows on Saturday afternoons. The **BLUE BLOODS,** who just had their self-titled CD put out by the Belgium Oi label **I Scream**, have recently been added to The Mad Cat roster, which includes punk rock acts like **SUSPECT DEVICE**, ska punk bands like the **STRAY BULLETS**, and New Hampshire's rockabilly bad boys **SATAN'S TEARDROPS**. These bands can frequently be found playing for great local causes, like Suspect Device's fundraiser for The Mission Hill Little League at the end of May. The Blue Bloods will also play a benefit for **Allston Brighton Free Radio,** a local censorship-free radio station, on July 3, with long time punk rock staple **KERMIT'S FINGER**, **SWAT,** and **ONE HALF SO PRECIOUS,** at everyone's favorite local towny bar, O'Briens Pub in Allston.

Unfortunately, Boston punks have taken ***Suburban Voice***, one of the oldest punk zines in the country, for granted. **Al Quint,** who has been publishing *SV* since the early 80s, has slowed his publishing schedule down to about one issue a year. This kind of sucks, but I don't blame the guy. Al has pretty much held up the "zine" part of the Boston scene for too long, and I wish I could share about other people doing cool zines, but there just aren't any. For now the only monthly punk zine that lists shows, reviews, and interviews is ***No. 13 Punk Zine***, a paper that I publish, along with the juvenile ***Paul The Punker*** and my buddy Matt J.'s ***Poor and Forgotten***. I hate including my own stuff, but they are the only ones in the city right now. Hopefully in the future I will be able to include other people's.

Boston has a fantastic legacy of hardcore and punk bands. Right now it is looking like the summer may bring us some great shows and even greater bands.

Pat, The FNS Guy
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Fresno scene report

CIVIL DUTY has been around a while now, playing a brand of fast-paced hardcore comparable to Negative Approach or say, Toxic Narcotic. They have a 7" out and play shows quite often. They're supposed to be doing a tour this summer, but I'm not sure of the details. They have another 7" that's supposed to be coming out some time in the future. (civilduty@hotmail.com). The **VICTIMS** are a street punk type of band... I don't know what to compare them to—I want to say the Casualties, but it's really not that bad. It's fast...it's punk. Charged hair and studs galore. They have a demo tape out but they say it's sold out and we never got one. I think if these guys stick around, they will turn a few heads. They really rock! (victimsoi@cs.com). Meg and I and two friends play in **STRAIGHT EDGE KEGGER.** We are thrashy hardcore punk blastcore with screamed female vocals. Sick as all hell—very, very fast, off the wall and very pissed off sound—that chick sounds *pissed*. A hyper thrash attack! We have a full 7" titled *Armed Robbery* that's coming out on P.F.C. (Sounds of Betrayal) label from Sweden. This will be out soon. A SEK/Gruk split 7" is out now on AlisaFish Records. We have a SEK/Uncle Charles split tape available on Blindead Productions from Sweden. We have patches and stickers, and we've played a lot of shows, too. Please write us! (6676 N. Bendel, Fresno, CA 93722)

Moving on, there's **ALL DEAD**—they play like a new school type hardcore. Melodic and straight-ahead, with poppy sort of breakdowns. They play lots of shows in the area too and have a decent following. They have a demo tape out

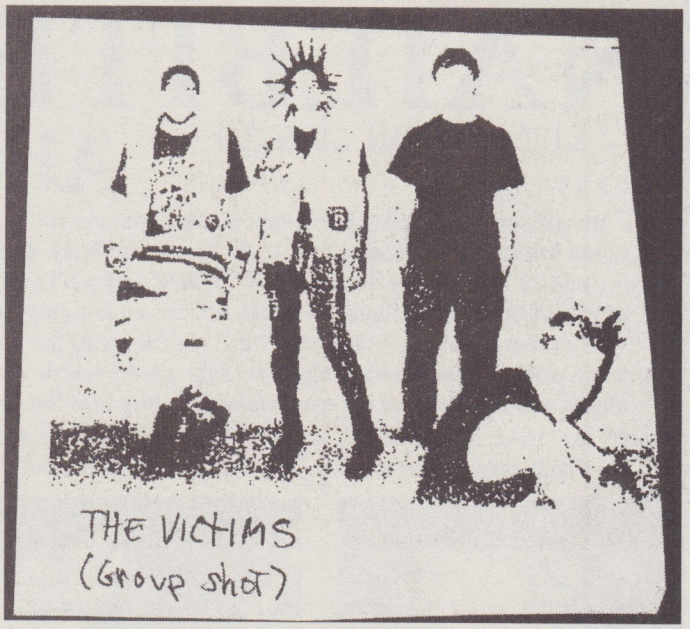
(xexistenz_unrealx@yahoo.com). **UPSIDE RIGHT** play new school pop punk, but nonetheless, they're here and play shows pretty often (upsiderightmail@aol.com). Then there's **FEEL1N FINE.** This is a band I'm into. Fast crushing Scandi-crust grind madness. Low tuned guitars with a thrashing edge. Very fast, then hella sludgy Scandi. Fast riffage. If you like low grind HC, then this band is for you. They have a demo tape out and a split 7" is in the works, I was told. (1284 N. Glenn, Fresno, CA 93728). The **CLICHES** are a bit off, in Madera (a town 20 minutes away). They play street punk style, but it's fast sometimes with shouted vocals. Then they play punk beats and stuff in their songs. They're cool guys.

Then **BACKSTORY** (ex-Capitol Punishment) plays roots of punk and do cover songs from way back when—Iggy, stuff like that. They are pretty good if you ask me—60s and 70s punk done with an edge. **NOT 4 HIRE** has been around a long fucking time and plays shows. They have a demo titled *Tragedy* and a CD called *Drunk and Live* out now. They play like mid-tempo to sort of fast punk with gruff vocals. A bit melodic at times, then a bit angry. They mix it all up and give it to you. Anti-Nazi lyrics. These guys don't ever seem to give up—it's great (PO Box 3868, Pinedale, CA 93650).

Then **MIDDLE CLASS MILE** plays new school punk like Propagandhi, NOFX, etc. They have a less produced recording than most of these bands, though. They've been around for a couple of years and play some shows. They have a free CDR demo out (middleclassmile@attbi.com). The **GETAWAYS** play fast new school punk with some parts that sound raw but not sloppy. They all go to high school, I think. They have a brand new demo out now.

Now brace yourself for **FEARLESS CHIMP**... The Chimp has been around for a long time. Fast thrash and grind done by one guy. This is a one-man band, on lots of tape and CD comps out there. Also there's a demo on Legion Productions out of Denver (1284 N. Glenn, Fresno, CA 93728). Then there's **NEEDY EVY**. This is an all-girl emo band. Song titles like "Love in Japanize"—total indie emo stuff (weareneedyeevy@hotmail.com). The **FALLOUTS** are good if you like fast Op Ivy type punk—very melodic, and they have a really rad drummer. They play some shows in the area every now and then. Then the **WEAKS** play pop punk with a capitol P for Pop! Like late Screeching Weasel. Very whiny, hyper pop, and the vocals are plain bratty. They have been playing some shows recently and are on the prowl. A demo is available by the weaklings (matty_weakling@hotmail.com). On to a few of the other smaller bands I play in. **DICK BUTKUS JOCKSTRAP.** What is to say about our new band? Really fast thrash with lots of punk and hardcore influences, with a pinch of butt rock. Good lyrics. We have a new tape out now for mailorder. We do Rupture and Roach Motel covers and we've played one show so far with yet another two-piece band called **FLAT TOP YOUTH** (bass and drums, with headache vocals), which is me and Steve from Straight Edge Kegger... **SNOT MASK** has been around a long while playing punk hardcore with lots of screaming. Very fast. This is a band all about DIY and thinking for yourself. We have a tape you can order. Those last three bands can be reached at the same place (6676 N. Bendel, Fresno, CA 93722).

NOWHERE FAST seemed to have popped up—they sound like a cross between DS 13 and Spazm 151, I hear. These kids are young and they're recording a demo soon, so look out for them (xnowherefastx@yahoo.com). **DYING WITHIN** is a hardcore band. I haven't heard much about them either (Rottensk8er@yahoo.com). Then there's **OCEAN'S RAZOR**—I think they play hardcore. They have a California tour planned for this summer and an upcoming 7". Plus they have limited computer disks for sale with a few songs on each. Cool looking covers... Well, I can't think of anything else so that about wraps it up. If you have any questions feel free to email or write. Keep thrashing, everyone.



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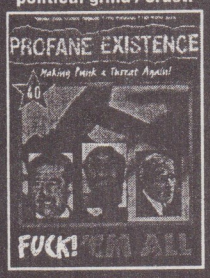

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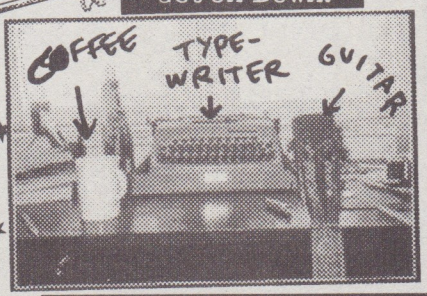

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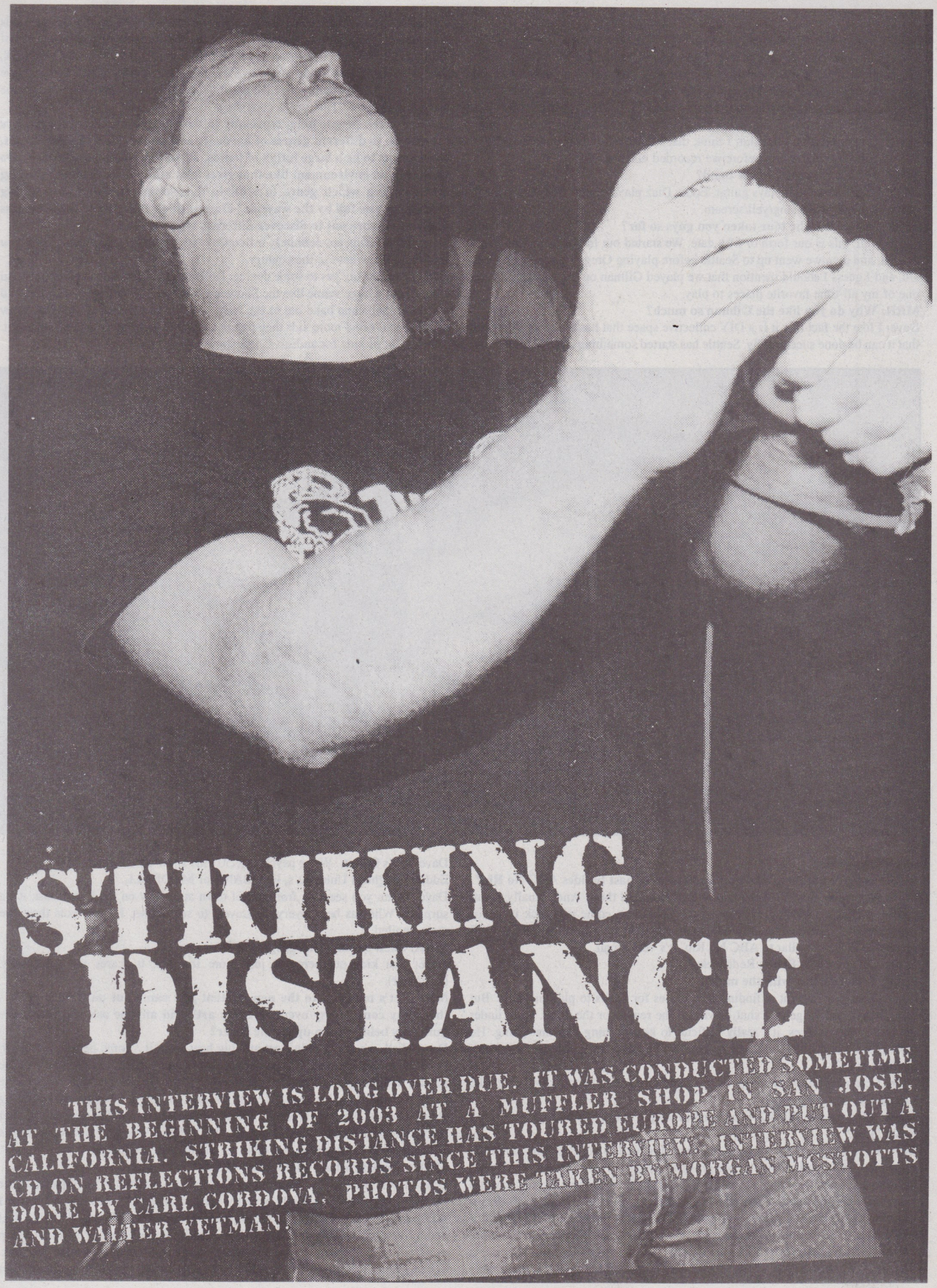

STRIKING DISTANCE

THIS INTERVIEW IS LONG OVER DUE. IT WAS CONDUCTED SOMETIME AT THE BEGINNING OF 2003 AT A MUFFLER SHOP IN SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA. STRIKING DISTANCE HAS TOURED EUROPE AND PUT OUT A CD ON REFLECTIONS RECORDS SINCE THIS INTERVIEW. INTERVIEW WAS DONE BY CARL CORDOVA. PHOTOS WERE TAKEN BY MORGAN MCSTOTTS AND WALTER YETMAN.

MRR: Before we begin, give me some history on the band.
Dave: The band first developed out of a couple of bands that we were in. I was playing drums for a band called FOR THE LIVING out of DC. Some of the guys who are currently in STRIKING DISTANCE were also in that band. They thought I should start singing in my own band. FOR THE LIVING was more in the melodic hardcore vein, while I wanted to start something that was more straightforward with no bullshit. I think that was sometime around early 1999. We practiced for six weeks before we recorded our first 7".
MRR: Who is currently in the band?
Dave: Mike Stankovich plays guitar, Eddie Diaz plays drums, and Aaron Barth plays bass. Oh, and I sing/yell/scream.
MRR: Where has the tour taken you guys so far?
Dave: Well, this is our forth or fifth date. We started out in Southern California in Ojai, and then we went up to Seattle before playing Oregon on the way back. Oh, and I guess I should mention that we played Gilman on the way up. That is one of my all-time favorite places to play.
MRR: Why do you like the Gilman so much?
Dave: I like the fact that it is a DIY collective space that has a history. It proves that it can be done successfully. Seattle has started something similar, called The (inaudible) Project.
MRR: Is there anything like that on the East Coast besides ABC No Rio?
Dave: Not really. Just VFW halls scattered here and there. And, usually, those end up getting messed up because of the idiots that come and fuck it up for everyone else. There is actually one small space in Baltimore called the CCS space that is very similar to ABC No Rio. It's very small.
Eddie: Do you know Robby Redcheeks?
MRR: I am familiar with the name.
Eddie: That guy is great at finding new places for bands to play in Philly. But they always end up getting shut down for one reason or the other. Even under the best circumstances, it's really difficult to keep a thing like that going. He finds these weird little clubs and spaces. We've never been able to find things like that in DC.
Dave: I can really appreciate the Gilman, and I hope that people don't ever take a place like that for granted.
MRR: Why do you think it is so hard to keep a thing like that going on the East Coast?
Dave: I don't know. That's a good question. It's hard to get everyone under the same idea. It's good to have a core group of people. If you can get 4 or 5 people who are actually organized, rather than a bunch of young kids that have no experience on how to start something like that up, let alone maintain it, then it might work. There is a place right now in DC called the Electric Maid; and it will probably be shut down because it's so disorganized. It's pretty frustrating. I think another reason why I like the Gilman, and the West Coast in general, is that the kids here are so appreciative. This might be because we don't play around here that much. But I think a larger part has to do with the fact that kids here are just nicer than kids on the East Coast. It's the truth. The kids on the East Coast don't bullshit. If they don't like the way you look or the way you walk, they'll stand outside while you play. Where as kids out here will at least give you a chance and watch you. Like a kid wearing a black metal shirt will come up to me and say, "That was a cool show."
MRR: I think people here, especially in the Northern California area, are more open to different genres of hardcore and punk. With the East Coast, there seems to be a large influx of bands, all within a four-hour radius. Do you think an environment like that gives kids more of an option of picking and choosing which genre to affiliate themselves with and then letting everything else fall by the wayside? Do you think that people there are less likely to venture out to discover different types of music?
Dave: I think kids are definitely influenced more by their local scene. But, you find that everywhere in the country.
Eddie: I would say yes to some degree. I still can't explain why a hardcore band can sell out a huge venue like the Showcase Theatre in Southern California, and then take that same band out to the East, and you're psyched if 150 kids show up. You won't find more kids than that at any show, anywhere on the East Coast. That's a lot of kids for an East Coast show.

Dave: Let's face it. We're psyched if 50 kids show up to see us.
Eddie: (laughter) Unless it's, like, BANE or MADBALL.
Dave: When you see kids from out of town at a show on the East Coast, it's a surprise. Whereas here, everyone travels to see shows. I guess kids there are more spoiled.
MRR: So, it's really just geography?
Dave: The kids out here are just more friendly. It scares me sometimes. (Laughter).
MRR:Let's move on to the new 7" that just came out on Bridge 9. Was there any controversy over the cover art? Did anyone ask you about the buildings being blown up on the cover?
Dave: Well, we really didn't get any big heat from it. Some people wanted to know what it was about. Some people saw it and hadn't read the lyrics to the record, and thought it was about September 11th. If you read the lyrics to the songs, "The Fuse is Lit" and, "Tear it Down", you'll get a better understanding about what the cover art is about. It's not necessarily about September 11th, but there is some overlap. Like the song, "Fight Their Words". But we were not out to piss off anyone who had relatives die in those buildings.
MRR: Explain what "Fight Their Words" is about.
Dave: Everyone realizes how serious September 11th was. A lot of people were surprised that someone would actually want to attack this country. I felt that I was being bombarded by the radio, parents, and TV, told how *I* should feel about September 11th and terrorism. Personally, I don't like to be told what to do. I am a stubborn person. I especially don't like being told what to think. When people told me that I should be waiving a flag and rallying around our

president because that was the right thing to do, I had to question that. I have to look inside myself and ask myself how we got into this situation.

MRR: Do you think you guys have a different perspective, being from the Washington DC area?

Dave: Initially, yes. It hit really close to home with me, because I had friends that worked at the Pentagon.

Eddie: My dad worked at the Pentagon.

Dave: Initially, I was very upset. I think being from the East Coast in general, we are probably a little more sensitive to the issue. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't dig deeper and find out what is at the root of these attacks. That doesn't mean that we have to zip our lip and agree with what the president says.

MRR: Do you think that September 11th has made the hardcore scene more nationalistic and patriotic?

Dave: I would say no.

Eddie: When all that shit had just happened, and the president was using his wartime powers, there was a lot of discussion in the bar that I worked at. I am bartender, so all I do all day is talk politics with people. Washington DC is a very political place for obvious reasons. I was constantly at odds with customers, co-workers, and family members.

MRR: Why were you at odds with them?

Eddie: Because we are not going to sacrifice liberty for security.

Dave: We *shouldn't.*

Eddie: But, the point was that we were. The notion that the footsteps of the axis of evil or whatever were getting closer and closer is a ridiculous notion to me. We were reading in the van recently that some kid with a "Not My President" t-shirt was questioned by the FBI in Ohio. That is a fucking joke. This country is founded on the ideas of revolution and change. Thomas Jefferson said, "A little revolution every 20 years makes for a healthy state of being," or something like that. I forget the exact quote. The point is that while George W. Bush is speaking, I am listening to *In God We Trust, Inc.* by the Dead Kennedys. The record is as relevant today as it was when it came out 20 years ago. That is a scary fucking thing to think about. It shouldn't be relevant. I don't want it to be relevant, but it is. So to actually answer your question about nationalistic hardcore and punk kids, I don't think the mentality has changed as far as numbers, but you probably see more kids today that want to blindly wave a flag around.

Dave: To sum it up, "Fight Their Words" is about not being a blind patriot. Figuring things out for yourself—

Eddie: —coming to conclusions on your own. However, I am not sure how anyone can come to the conclusion that George W. Bush is an intelligent man, saying intelligent things, and making intelligent decisions. If your opinion is different than mine, then fine. But coming to your opinion because your mom stuck an American flag sticker next to her Jesus Christ fish is not going to cut it.

Dave: It seemed at the time that if you lived on the East Coast and you weren't into the whole national pride and vengeance thing, then you weren't an American. That is fucked. I do not in any way want to be associated with the "Americans" who went around kicking the shit out of people from the Middle East.

MRR: Let's move on to the song "Cutthroat". Is it a comment on society in general or is it about something more specific?

Dave: When I wrote the song it was about something very personal that happened to me. But it is also a broad comment on money and its relationship to people. The song is initially about a close family member of mine who used my name to open a fake credit card account. They amassed $22,000 in debt in my name before they were caught. It got me thinking about what is so wrong with society in general that someone so close to me would value money over our relationship. Money should never come between relatives and friends. It still pisses me off, so that's why we still play it.

MRR: What is the meaning behind "Find a Way"?

Dave: That song came from what was probably the lowest point in my life. About a year ago, I was laid off from my dream job, and—

MRR: What was your dream job?

I work in human resources. I have a Masters degree in industrial organization psychology. I have been working in human resources since 1997. I got a job at this high-tech company. I don't need to go into too much detail about my job, because the point is that I really enjoyed my work, which not everyone can say. I didn't have to wear a tie or dress up. I could wear jeans and a nice shirt. I didn't have to be there at a set time. It was the best job ever. And I got laid off because the economy started sucking wind. That night we played a show in New Jersey and I blew out my knee. As of that night, I didn't have any medical insurance. I have been skateboarding for over 17 years, and my left knee has always taken a good beating. But that night it completely blew out. I also stopped dating the girl that I had been dating for a long time. I became this recluse. I never left the house and started drinking alone every night. I finally got to a point where I dreaded waking up the next day; I actually thought that the next day would be worse than the day before it. Logic was out the window. Then one day I woke up and said, "This is it. It can't get any worse. It can only get better from here on out." I stopped drinking and started trying to get my shit straight. I sat down and made a plan. It was in hindsight that I realized that I was caught in this trap of my own making. I eventually got out of it with my own brain. Without the help of psychiatrists, booze, or drugs, I got out of the trap. And I got to thinking, "If I can do it, an average schmoe, then anyone can get out." I had friends that turned to heroin and died when their life started getting shitty. There's lines in the song about that So I wanted to write a positive song about getting through it. All it takes is sitting down and getting your life straight. It sounds cheesy, but it was a "self-help" song in a way.

MRR: It's a pretty positive song, then.

Dave: Totally. That the problem with people's idea of Striking Distance. They think we're this negi-band because my vocals are angry and we have these tough guy breakdowns, but most of our songs are pretty positive.

MRR: What would you say is the most misunderstood thing about Striking Distance?

Eddie: Well, we're not super-friendly to kids we don't know, because we are all socially retarded, like every other hardcore kid. People take that as us being snobby, when really we just don't know how to approach people. f we did, we probably wouldn't be into hardcore (laughs).

Dave: I think I am little different in that aspect. Compared to the other guys, I like talking to people at shows. I used to never talk to people. But then over the years I have really broken myself of that habit. Life is short. I want to get to know as many people and get to know what their opinions are and what makes them tick Hardcore is everywhere. What's hardcore like in Oregon? I want to know. I am the public relations person in the band. They all give me shit for it.

Eddie: In the time Striking Distance has been a band, the DC scene has come together.

sticking up for friends. If a stupid skinhead or thug is messing with our friends, we are going to stand up to them. We are not going to be pushed around by a bunch of meatheads. If that means a fight outside of the show, then so be it. You have to police your scene. It's unfortunate. I am not sure if San Francisco has this problem, but DC used to have a very violent scene.

Eddie: It was scary to go to shows. If you don't police your DIY venues, then all you have left is big clubs with those same thugs as security.

MRR: Does this attitude peg you guys as a tough guy band?

Dave: I think in the minds of some of the kids in DC, yes. But I don't care about what they think. We aren't a tough guy band. People listen to a song like "Hated", and assume we are this hate core band. That couldn't be farther from the truth. Read the fucking lyrics! It's those kind of people that assume things instead of coming up to us and asking us

corporate. I would rather play on the floor in front of 30 kids than play behind a barricade on a stage in front hundreds of kids. But if the time comes where we have to play a shows like that, then we will cross that bridge when we come to it. It's not something you could say I was looking forward to personally.

MRR: I wanted to touch on something that Dave said when the tape recorder was off. You used the phrase, "When I grow up." Do you not consider yourself grown up?

Dave: No way! (laughs) I am still in a hardcore band. I am not fucking close. I am feeling the pressure. A lot of people I grew up with are married with kids and then divorced. Some of them have been married twice. My workplace is a completely different environment. They think differently. They have priorities. They have families and kids to support. I don't have any kids, so I can do this. I am going to do this as long as I can. If I get married and have kids, then priorities have to change. That's the

Dave: A lot closer than it has ever been.

Eddie: We actually hang out with kids from Maryland, like the kids from Desperate Measures.

Dave: That was unheard of in 1997. Virginia kids didn't go to shows in Maryland, and if they did, they didn't talk to any of the Maryland kids. There was no communication. That lack of communication was the impetus for a lot of the early Striking Distance material. The scene might be a little smaller than it was, but it's a lot more tight knit.

Eddie: As far as in DC particularly, things have "happened", and there have been some "incidents" at Striking Distance shows.

MRR: Like what kind of incidents?

Eddie: Anything from fights starting to firecrackers that shut down shows.

Dave: Striking Distance has received a bad reputation in the DC area because we stand up for ourselves. If there is a sketchy promoter, we're going to call him out. There was a guy in DC who quit his full time job to put on DIY shows in a church. He was making $8,000 a show while paying headliners $150. We stood up to him and shut his place down. Fuck him. People making money off punk and hardcore is not right. We got shit for that. We get shit for

about what the lyrics are about. Those are the kids I can't fucking stand. Someone is going to tell those people the next coolest thing, and then they will be gone. Fuck them.

MRR: Do your lyrics get misinterpreted a lot?

Dave: Oh yeah, all the time. People think "Fail Me, Fail You" is about sticking up for your hardcore friends or some shit like that, when really it isn't about that at all. But I don't like to be too specific. I don't like to tell people what to think. Striking Distance does not exist to tell other people what to think. I appreciate when bands write little paragraphs after each song, but I don't think we need to do that. I think my lyrics are specific enough that people won't be saying, "You know, I think Striking Distance is this white power band."

MRR: Does Striking Distance have any guidelines as far as shows you will or will not play?

Dave: We used to be a band where we would play anywhere. If you had an electric socket, we would play there. We would play parties, house shows, and junkyards…hell, we just played a muffler shop. It's still like that I guess, but we've gotten bigger. I definitely don't want to play a place that has bouncers and a barricade. That's not punk or hardcore, that's

way it goes. Hardcore is not going to put my kid through college.

MRR: Any last words?

Eddie: If kids don't take cues from what's going with the war and with their president, then hardcore might as well fold. The only hardcore band that I see making a direct statement is the Suicide File.

Dave: I agree with Eddie. Are you going to be moshing and finger pointing in your bedroom when bombs are going off outside your window?

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the malCONtents

Interview by Billy Whitfield

I first met singer/guitarist Doug Cawker at the Las Vegas Shakedown in 2002. We became fast friends over our mutual love of punk rock and garage music. He quickly discovered that I created the fanzine, Toxic Flyer, and I learned that he used to write for the now-defunct zine Flipside under the name "Dooger." Doug directed the shoestring punk rock film Born To Lose, as well as having a garage punk band called The Malcontents He sent me their first 7", the Liquor Store EP, and I flipped out! It had a really cool power-pop edge that combined a bit of The Leaving Trains and The Replacements, with a hint of Britain's Only Ones as well. I e-mailed some questions to Dave Dunton (Guitars, Bass) and Doug (Vocals, Guitar, Drums) and got them to blab on about their rockin' outfit!

MRR: Please give us a small band history. What other bands were you in?

Doug: I started out in the Toronto hardcore band, Buzz Aldrin, in about 1983. We truly sucked. Hardcore was really difficult to play for guys that had never picked up instruments. It's funny, the really good 80s hardcore band, Direct Action, used to drop in on our rehearsals once in a while and openly laughed at how inept we were! The band quickly imploded and I joined the Toronto garage punk band, The Dundrells. They were much better. We put out a few 7"s, and the group even opened for the Replacements on the Tim tour. From there it was onto another good garage punk ensemble, The Love Brothers for a few years, then the psychedelic punk band, The Stych in Time, out of New York City. I played with the Mitchell Brothers in San Francisco, and finally The Malcontents here in Los Angeles.

Dave: A lot of bedroom bands for me. I played with guys from Bad Oskar, with Doug of course, and Darylict Von Stapleton of the Edmonton Von Stapletons, who's now in the Hell Brothers. I also have played with a bunch of other Raleigh, North Carolina yawlternative and punk guys who were on the scene at the time. I released an album with the Honest Mechanics called Screwed Down So Tight, in my Dallas days.

MRR: How would you describe your band's sound?

Dave: Real loose, sort of what you would get if you crossed mid to early Replacements with Jeff Dahl, and then threw in some old Modern Lovers and tossed it over a nice bed of green Rolling Rocks. Doug: Yeah, Rolling Rocks are in there, along with some Husker Du and Ramones!

MRR: What got you into making movies and what have you done so far?

Doug: I've wanted to make films since I was a kid actually. Born To Lose is my only one so far, because film is such an expensive medium. I own a Digital Video camera now, so the sky's the limit. Let the sickness reign!

Dave: They don't let me into the movies since the last time I did "it" there.

MRR: How long did it take you to make Born To Lose? Is that based on Johnny Thunders?

Doug: It took about five years to write, shoot, edit, play the festival circuit,

and find distribution. It's not really based on Thunders, but I stole the title from one of his best songs for sure! It's really more of a sour grapes movie about some experiences that I have had in a lot of shitty bands over the years. (laughs) It's more of a "fuck you" to the idiots that I have played with along the way.

MRR: Have the reviews of the movie been good so far? Is it out on DVD or VHS yet?

Doug: Truthfully, the reviews have not been bad, but sometimes mixed. I understand the criticism of it, because it's a little flawed, but it is my first film. If I can say one thing positive about the movie, it's that there's a bit of soul squeaking through and that's pretty rare, even in multi-million dollar pictures. In that respect, it's all right, I guess. Joe Carducci, the ex-head of SST Records was our first distributor. I'm really lucky that I found him because he's a really cool guy, and he has that strong DIY work ethic from all of his years on the road with Black Flag. I learned a lot from him and he also knows what good punk rock is as well, so I was really happy that we found each other. The movie recently moved to a bigger distributor though, Vanguard Cinema. They can get it to a few more places than Joe could, but Joe and I are still good friends.

MRR: Do you feel that the internet is the best way to get your art or media out there these days?

Dave: Yeah, the web is now pretty much the only outlet. Live music venues that actually let unknowns play are becoming more and more rare, especially if you actually play an instrument instead of a turntable. The only problem with the web is there's a huge signal to noise ratio. Everybody and their dyslexic cat are doing something on the web. Standing out without stooping down to stupid "look at me!" stunts is difficult. But then again, that's the cool thing about it.
Doug: I actually think the web has been really great. I like that punks can find rare records, trade with friends overseas easier, check out a band's MP3 before they buy an album. We found this band, The Fantastic 5 from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on MP3.com and we're going to put out a split 7" with them. So it's been cool for that type of stuff.

MRR: What releases do you have out so far?

Dave: The Born to Lose soundtrack on Bomp, A couple of 7"s by the Malcontents, The Honest Mechanics. Doug: And our new split 7" that I just mentioned.

MRR: So what bands or movies got you into music and films?

Dave: I've always been into music - from running around in circles to Polyethylene Pam (someone needs to punk that up) at age three, to discovering the Sex Pistols at two AM in the morning with my radio walkman in bed from a local radio station, to getting shit faced with Bob Forest after a Thelonious Monster show, to using a guitar and a very loud amp in my bedroom at three in the morning, to keep me from killing someone or myself. I like movies, but I don't eat them for breakfast like I do music.
Doug: It's funny, in the last issue of MRR, a band member said that old school meant that he was, well, old! I fall into that category. (laughs) My brother had the worst taste in music that he used to subject me to in the 70s. Savoy Brown, Seals and Crofts; it got worse and worse! I eventually discovered fanzines like Creem and Hit Parader, and from that eventually got into the Ramones, Iggy, The New York Dolls, and finally, British bands like Buzzcocks, Damned, Blitz, U.K. Subs, and Menace. I'm trying to get a little broader in my old age!

MRR: How's the music scene out in California these days? What local bands are you into and what clubs or hangouts are cool these days?

Doug: Good question! I like the all-ages shows that Jean Luc used to put on at Headline Records. The Garage has some cool gigs. Occasionally, knobby places like the Troubadour, the Whiskey, and the Roxy have good shows. Spaceland isn't bad. I haven't been to The Smell downtown yet, but I hear that it's a good venue too. Los Angeles has a pretty good local scene too like Texas Terri and The Stiff Ones, the Lazy Cowgirls, the Humpers, TSOL, and a few great ones from the past like the Joneses, Trash Can School, L7, and X. Most of the Hollywood bands blow massive chunks though.

MRR: How would you compare today's music scene with the early days, when you first got into the music scene?

Dave: Back then it was a lot more earnest and true. When someone wore a torn up flannel shirt and played a piece of shit Silvertone guitar thru an old tube amp; it wasn't for style. It was all they could afford. Now it's about a look. The Better Youth Organization shit from the early 80s was great because most of these kids were actually out on the street. It's the same with late 70s punk, The Replacements and Husker Du had the same ethic. Let's start a band because we like music and someone will pay us to get drunk. The Descendants/All still tour in a piece of shit van and they still make better music than most people could ever hope to. I honestly can't think of a truly original music form that has come out lately.
Doug: Have you seen those pseudo punk bands on MTV lately? Without naming names, you know the

ones I mean, the groups with the pierced lips, tats, going "yo, yo" with the hand motions like they're from the hood, and the funny-looking bicycles? What is that? I'm embarrassed to call myself a punk rocker when I see that shit. I know that it's safe, above-ground crap and I can and do turn it off, but it's an abomination. Give me the Exploding Hearts and the Briefs any day. What people call punk rock in above ground culture is for junior high school kids, it's totally safe. In the really old days it was created by people in their early twenties, so the lyrics weren't so juvenile and it didn't feel safe at all. I mean, we don't see Poison Idea on music video stations, but we should.

MRR: Where do your ideas for songs and movies come from?

Dave: It's a gut thing for me. Not "Oh, let me sit down and write a song about this or that" and then sculpt it for the next three weeks. It's gotta be urgent, cathartic, painful. I wish I could write at a drop of a hat, but it's always been more of a release for me than an active conscious activity.
Doug: I'm with Dave there. Both music and film are sort of like therapy for me. I can't feel inspired if my life has been all soft and mushy. And believe me, it hasn't been for the past five years. I just sit down, play some chords, and puke it out. I like hooks though, so I try to get some kind of melody going-a ghetto blaster is a good tool to remember a good riff and vocal too. I highly recommend it as a way to record your best bits!

MRR: What other things are you into?

Dave: My wife. Motorcycle riding, not those pig lard ass Harleys, but bikes that are canyon carving and knee dragging, physics and doing dumb shit with it. World Rally Championship racing makes NASCAR or F1 drivers look like pussies. Drinking and hanging with my friends, doing stupid shit you can talk and laugh about later. Eating food. Grand Theft Auto 3 on PS2. Hacking computers.
Doug: I've been drinking too much lately. I'm originally a Canadian and we know how to drink! I like to track down rare music from bands I like. To clear my head, I like to venture down to Venice Beach and look at all of the freaks!

MRR: Any other cool stories to share?

Dave: I once met both Johnny Rotten and George Clinton on the same trip from LA to Detroit in airport bars and shared beers. Johnny in LA, he was wearing an Iggy Pop Brick by Brick tour shirt, and George in Detroit, wearing that crazy shit he always wears.
Doug: In the early eighties, I shared a rehearsal space with the Viletones. Everything you've heard about Nazi Dog and the rest of his hooligans is worse than you thought. These guys would have been the perfect backing band for G.G. Allin. They used to sniff massive amounts of glue before they came into the space and their eyes would be spinning around in their heads and they always wanted to fuck with us, especially their drummer. He'd accuse me of playing his drums and try to hit me. This mountain of a guitar player that we had would put him down. They really were totally psycho and dangerous. I'm not surprised that they wrote "Screaming Fist."

MRR: What are some favorite shows that stick out in your rock and roll memories?

Dave: Replacements on the Tim tour at St. Andrews in Detroit. Bob Stinson didn't show up for half the show and Paul kept asking people to play with them. Sugar at the Cat's Cradle in North Carolina. My ears rang for three fucking days, but it was worth it. White Flag in Los Angeles back in the early 90s sometime at the Gaslight before it folded, great fucking show. Getting my ass kicked by a bunch of skinheads in 1981 in Detroit after a Violent Femmes show.
Doug: The Diesel Queens in Hollywood in the mid-nineties. The gig lasted about two and a half songs; beer bottles were flying through the air, glass shards flying everywhere, it was chaotic but memorable. The Ramones at the Ritz in New York in the mid 80s was a great show. Uh, there are so many. I just saw Turbonegro at the Troubadour and they were great too! The Gun Club and Husker Du in the early 80s in Toronto, a tribute show to one of punk rock's greatest drummers, Dimwit; with DOA and a bunch of other great bands in the 90s in Vancouver. God, I could go on forever.

MRR: What are your favorite movies?

Doug: Another State of Mind, Midnight Cowboy, Prick Up your Ears, Fargo, Taxi Driver, Out Of The Blue, Naked, Ed Wood, and Planet of the Apes!
Dave: Fight Club, Dr. Strangelove, Three O'Clock High, Leaving Los Vegas, Raising Arizona, The Usual Suspects, Matrix, Donnie Darko, and Bob Roberts.

MRR: So you lived next door to a porn star once. How was that? Can you tell us about it?

Doug: Yeah, my neighbor for about five years was the gang-bang world record holder, Jasmine St. Claire. She was pretty nice actually, but a bit "dingy," as you might imagine. The funny thing was that she appeared on Howard Stern five times and still believed that her mom never knew that she was in porn. Uh, hello, your brain cells are a popping! She used to have stalkers come by her place and she'd seek refuge in my apartment. This older couple who lived upstairs from me would see her having sex all of the time, because Jasmine would leave the curtains open and perform for them. Twisted I know, but believe me, Cora Lee and Eddie got some tips from her!
Dave: God I wish I knew that when I lived there. I was so lonely!

MRR: What stuff do you have to plug?

Dave: My coffee maker, and the number seven.
Doug: My wallet from buying so many new records, God damn it!

MRR: Any future plans?

Dave: To redo the Honest Mechanic sessions and release them. They need more crunch. Record more with Doug. Lots more.
Doug: Yeah, more records. Vinyl is the way to go!
www.peppydoe.com, www.borntolose.com

The Invisible City

Interview by Kat Case.

MRR: I saw your last show in SF at a club here, in middle of a lineup with way too many bands and way too many hipsters, and I was still dancing like a maniac. I was really excited by the mixture of styles I saw going on there; Hesper's vocal style (and gender) are pretty rare in the noise scene. Can you describe Invisible City's music to the uninitiated?

Steve: We're fans of the two-minute song. A lot of bands tend to indulge with these really long, bloated songs. Invisible City strives for songs that can grab the listener within the first couple seconds. I feel that our music is a perfect balance of turbulent noise and tight structure. Bobby's bass playing and Adan's drumming hold up a tight rhythm section, which leaves me, as the guitarist, complete freedom to do whatever I want. Hesper's voice is a force to be reckoned with. I believe she binds the entire band together with her voice. I get asked a lot how I would describe Invisible City's music and the best response I have is we're a noise band with a heart. But really, this is a noise band you can actually dance to, possibly make-out to.**MRR: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's perfect! I'll remember that—"a noise band you can make out to." I noticed that people seem to really rock out to you, even those who are unfamiliar with your music. Is being a dance band important to you?**

Hesper: Actually, that's funny because I have never really considered Invisible City to be a dance band, but it is really important to me to make music that people can dance to... so the fact that you say that makes me really happy.

Bobby: When Hesper and I did shows in Flag there was no better feeling than seeing a room full of sweaty, dancing bodies, and people imbibing, having a good time. We were really spoiled; even the bad turnouts and lame shows were great fun. Music, or pop music, is for dancing and enjoying. I don't think we ever considered ourselves a dance band, however I think that I've reacted, at least to a certain extent, to the waves of indifference that the people that go to shows in Tucson send out when they see great bands; I think it effects our live show.

MRR: You guys are going on a longer tour in July. Where are you going and for how long?

Adan: We are going up the West Coast and over to Missoula, Montana. Then we go down the Rockies to Denver. We plan on starting July 10th and touring for two weeks straight.

MRR: You tour in a station wagon with a Haul attached to the back—

Hesper: Yep. I'm getting a transmission cooler put on so I don't blow the transmission pulling the trailer. And if I can't find someone to take care of our two dogs, then they are coming along also.

MRR: What's the scene like in Arizona right now?

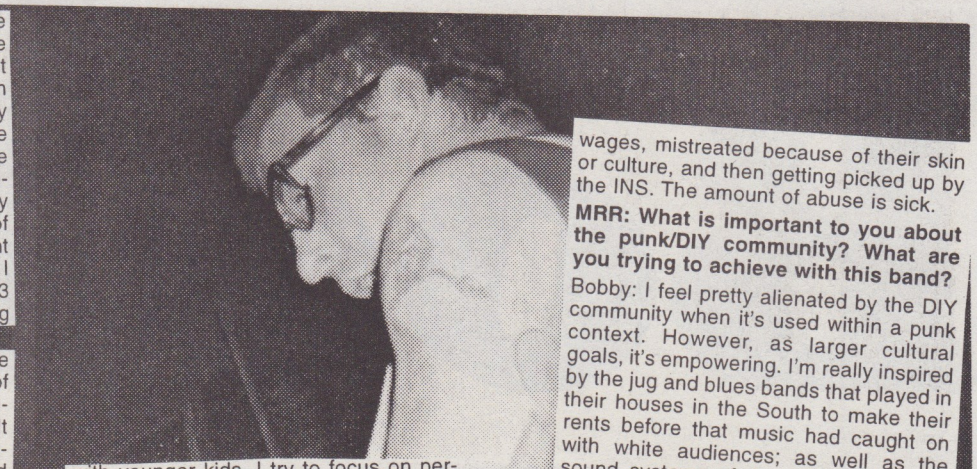
Bobby: Hesper and I did shows at our house in Flagstaff for a long time. They're still going on at different houses and clubs there, it's all on www.robothouse.org. There are awesome bands there like Stab City, Slit Wrists and Ponies. There are great bands in Tucson, too, but like everywhere in Arizona, no one cares. It seems like there are all kinds of invisible things going on, that spread across all the spectrums, that if you're aware of are totally inspiring, and better than the boring stuff that gets covered in glossy mags and whatever. But everything is pretty separated and isolated. To me, that's what the name Invisible City is about.

Hesper: The scene in Arizona is inconsistent and divided. Most cool things that are going on in one of the three cities here (Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff) are not shared with the others. If everyone got together, Arizona could be one rockin'state.

Steve: As far as Tucson bands go, the Knockout Pills, Car Full of Bosnians, and Cocaine Piñata are all pretty swell people.

MRR: Adan, I know you were very involved with the Phoenix scene in the 90s, with your old band, Bored to Death, and your participation in many DIY, illegal, all-ages spaces. Tell us a little about your experiences then, and what's different now.

Adan: Well, the place that I work at, Centro Digna #135, has been letting people do shows there. It is a space that was created by three different non-profit political groups, but now we are down to two: Border Action Network, which deals with racism along the border, and the Roofers Union #135, where I work as an organizer, which is ninety-five percent Latino immigrants. We wanted to open up an office space for the organizations but also have this space that people in the community could use for a variety of different things. Food Not Bombs of Tucson meets there, we have free movie nights, poetry slams, and punk shows. Now I don't book any shows, but rather people come and say they know a band



that wants to play and we let them use the space. It works out for me, cause although I have no time to promote right now I am able to be active in providing an all-ages place to do shows, which really affects scenes in general. So far, we have not had any problems with the police or anyone else and it is going really good; but that could change at any moment. I participated in a number of spaces when I lived in Phoenix that went under for many different reasons, so I can say that I have learned a lot in my 13 years of doing shows and running spaces. I really like how we run it at the Centro Digna #135, because instead of doing all the shows myself, the community is really involved in the process. It helps to build a lot more personal relations in this city that is really splintered as far as the different scenes go.

MRR: Have you heard of any other union halls doing punk shows?

Adan: I know that in Phoenix the plumber's hall, UA #469, used to do shows a long time ago, in the early 90s. I am sure there were others, but right now I think that we are the only union hall in Arizona that does punk shows.

MRR: How did you guys meet? I know some of you work together.

Bobby: Adan and I were in a short-lived band back in Flagstaff years ago. Hesper and I share a bank account.

Steve: I met Bobby through work. We both work like slaves at a video store here in Tucson. But on the bright side, we're both fluent in the language of film. Bobby loves Paul Newman movies. I'm a sucker for Hollywood musicals. Bobby responded to an ad that I put up at work looking for musicians interested in starting a noise band. We started playing, just the two of us, a couple times a week. We had great ideas, but nothing was really forming. Bobby knew this drummer guy named Adan from Flagstaff. He thought Adan might dig our dissonant brand of music. So then there were three of us. The songs just started to come right out at that point. We auditioned singer after signer. Junkies, cokeheads, hypochondriacs, we could not find anyone with the chops to sing for us. Then we found a fifth grade teacher to sing. Hesper, Bobby's significant other, fit into the band perfectly.

MRR: So Adan, you work, or have worked until recently, as a union organizer, and Hesper is an elementary school teacher. How do you combine your politics with your daily lives, and how does your work affect your music and how you choose to do things? Hesper, which is your secret life? Being a teacher or a punk?

Hesper: This is something that I used to think about all of the time, when I was in school to be a teacher. I almost decided *not* to become a teacher because I was scared it would involve too much compromise, which would eventually lead to a complete breakdown of my moral conscience. Then I actually started teaching and realized that it has the potential to be one of the most punk things I've ever been involved with. Because I'm coming from such a radical political/educational perspective, my whole approach to teaching is totally DIY. I bring my politics to my classes, but because I'm dealing with younger kids, I try to focus on personal and social/human interaction issues. Like how and why we should respect other people, creatures, the earth, and ourselves, and how it's all intertwined. There are a lot of ways to say the shit that goes on the world is whack without using those words. I teach kids to think for themselves. This is especially relevant with the girls I teach, they are just starting to learn how inadequate they are measuring up to the standards imposed on them, and so they need a feminist as a teacher! My students all know I play in two bands, as do my coworkers, so I wouldn't say that my punk life is secret. I do feel like I have to prove myself more than others though to get taken seriously in the world of the public school. To answer the question about how this all affects the songs I write, the lyrics I write are simple translations of my perceptions of the world—so my politics, my experiences as a teacher, as a woman, as an insomniac, and everything else that I am, go into the songs that I write. They're all part of the same scheme.

Adan: I still work for the union as an organizer. It has been pretty crazy for me to balance my personal politics, which are pretty much anti-authoritative, with working in a trade union, which are known for being pretty conservative. Our local is based out of Phoenix and I run the Tucson area, which has allowed me to put my two cents in more than if I worked in Phoenix. I talk with the workers all the time against the war and Bush. A lot of them were also against the war. We actually talk about politics a lot in my union so I have been pretty lucky, but there are many things that I don't agree with also. The AFL-CIO only several years ago came out in support of immigrants. My union has had to deal with tons of racism within the labor movement because we have so many undocumented members. Being Chicano, and living on the border, labor/racism/immigration issues are all intertwined at a very visible level. These issues are relevant and personal to me. I try to really connect them all with our work and our work in the community. There are so many stories of Latino workers being cheated out of wages, mistreated because of their skin or culture, and then getting picked up by the INS. The amount of abuse is sick.

MRR: What is important to you about the punk/DIY community? What are you trying to achieve with this band?

Bobby: I feel pretty alienated by the DIY community when it's used within a punk context. However, as larger cultural goals, it's empowering. I'm really inspired by the jug and blues bands that played in their houses in the South to make their rents before that music had caught on with white audiences; as well as the sound systems of Jamaica and people creating something out of nothing there.

Hesper: It's important to me that people haven't given up and given in. Without this support system, I would feel all alone and I don't think I would ever sleep.

Adan: I think that it is great that people have been very supportive of our band. And ever since we started booking shows at the Centro Digna #135, people have really took it upon themselves to keep the place clean and generally respect it so that shows can keep going on there.

Bobby: If people like what we're doing and relate, that should figure itself out.

Hesper: I just want to have fun and have people have fun at our shows.

MRR: You guys are obviously political people who resist the apathy that has overcome so much of our generation. What sort of activism do you guys do? Are there issues that you are trying to address with your music?

Bobby: Personally, I don't do any sort of activism outside of my personal day-to-day choices. I'm pretty confused, but it seems to me that most of our freedoms to demonstrate and to speak freely act only as buffers from being able to create any sort of change or do anything that might be decided in a democratic way. The way the media has operated in the last few years has only increased my paranoia. I just try to act in a way that separates myself from the war-hungry masses.

Steve: We are a band with strong views on politics, but we are not a band with a political mission. This band, at least for me, is a form of escapism from all the shit that's going on in the world right now.

Bobby: I'm still struggling to get my family and peers to consider what I'm doing music, never mind what sort of messages I'm trying to convey.

Adan: As individuals we do a lot of different things politically and as activism. As a band, I think that the music and the lyrics speak for themselves about how we use our music as a vehicle for discussing different issues.

MRR: Anything else you want to say?

Adan: We have a record coming out in the fall. Right now we have a demo CDR that people can send $5 dollars for.

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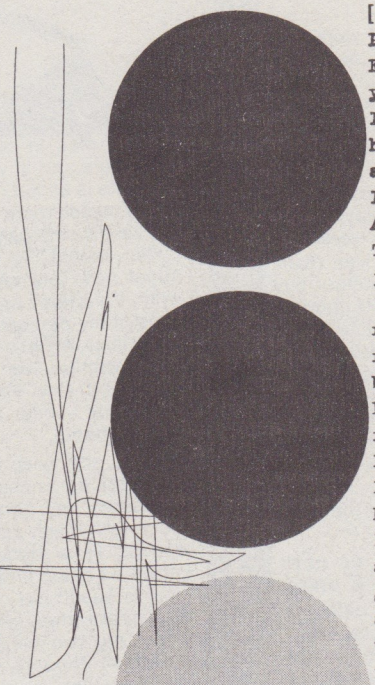
Books Lie

BOOKS LIE IS A BAND THAT FALLS BETWEEN THE GAPS. THEY ARE NOT TOUGH ENOUGH FOR THE HARDCORE KIDS, THEY ARE NOT SOFT ENOUGH FOR THE EMO NERDS, AND THEY CERTAINLY AIN'T CRUSTY ENOUGH FOR THE PUNX. IT'S FOR THIS LACK OF PANDERING TO ANY TREND OR STYLE THAT I RESPECT THEM. THEY HAVE RECORDS OUT ON SATELLITE TRANSMISSION, LEVEL PLANE, AND A NEW FULL-LENGTH, WEEP, ON COALITION. BOOKS LIE IS DAWN, MYLES, JEREMY, AND ADAM. THIS IS AN EMAIL CHAT WITH ADAM.

Interview **by Steven Carlin.**



•MRR: How was 2002 for Books Lie? What were your personal high points and low points of the year?

Adam: For me the high points were being able to tour Europe and finishing our new album, as well as having that come out and being able to actually have the finished record. Touring in the US was great too, and playing in Boston is always the best. We got to do that several times. Having Jeremy join the band was a high point. The low point, I guess, for me was dealing with Eric when we weren't getting along, as well as dealing with the band right after he and the band split. Getting kicked out of our practice' space was pretty terrible, too. Overall, the biggest disappointment, though, were all the delays with our record and it seems like people don t know it exists yet. I think it is ten times better than our first album and thus far I haven't gotten much feedback. The feedback I have gotten seems to be mostly from people who either don't like that we changed our sound, or they are simply unfamiliar and uninterested in the band. Although maybe we just suck.

•MRR: Why do you think this [lack of feedback] exists? Do you think being on a European label leads to your record being overlooked compared to if it had been on Level Plane or any of the bigger American labels?

Adam: I really don t know. There are certainly worse problems we could have, but I don't think it is label-related, or at least not related to Coalition being based in the Netherlands. First and foremost, we make records for ourselves, but I would be lying if I said I didn't want people to hear them and hopefully like them. I think there are a lot of factors in getting people to check out a recording, and most of them are beyond our control. I don't wanna come off all whiney. I am really grateful we get to make records and tour at all.

•MRR: You came over here to Europe in 2002. How was the tour? How does Europe compare to the US with regard to shows and crowds?

Adam: The tour was fantastic. A lot of the shows and crowd sizes were pretty similar to the kind of shows we have in the states, but there were a few that were just unbe-

lievably huge for us, like nothing we had ever done. The US and Europe are similar in their hardcore scenes, some places are full of rad kids who dance and go nuts, and some places you get a lot of people that just stare at you. In general, I was really jealous of the European hardcore scene; people seemed more stoked on music and I think that the concept of DIY is something that is much more respected in Europe. Over here it's all about lame indie rock in 21-and-over clubs.

•MRR: Why do you think that [the concept of DIY] is more "adhered to" in Europe? Do kids in the states not know what's what?

Adam: I don't think that DIY doesn't exist or isn't adhered to in the US, but I got the sense that doing a DIY band is considered a valid artistic choice in Europe, as opposed to here, where it sometime seems like a ghetto or "minor league" situation. It really limits our ability to play at many venues in New York, as well as even being able to play with some of my close friends' bands, simply because the perception is that a DIY band plays to a "different" audience.

•MRR: How did you find the people that worked with you on the tour? Did all the kids booking shows have their shit together?

Adam: Luckily, Florian found us and, between he and Ralph, moved us around and pretty much completely took care of our dumb asses for the whole tour. Most of the shows we play are usually pretty well organized, but in the states as well as overseas, you occasionally show up somewhere to complete apathy from the promoter or kid doing the show. Athens Georgia = Copenhagen, Denmark. Then, of course, there was Chris Thackers, who promised to deal with the UK tour, and then hid from us like a dirty vicar when we showed up!

•MRR: What are your plans release-wise for 2003? You had an EP on Level Plane and a new split out over the past year, the CD *Weep* was reviewed in the January issue of *Maximum Rock n Roll*? tell me more about it. Is this the new album on Coalition? How did you hook up with them? Is there a vinyl version to follow?

Adam: We are working on new material right now, but it is going slowly. Our first plan is to record six or so songs for a Level Plane 12". We would also like to compile a CD of all the 7"s, split 7" comps, and odds and ends that exist. There is a Books Lie EP that came out, limited to 300, last year on Carmen Diablo. There is also a lost 7" that never came out, and some leftovers too: covers, demos, live stuff. However, since there really isn't that much demand for our rare stuff, we will probably focus more on trying to get something new done first.

Weep is our latest full length; it is a 13-track LP/CD. About 32 minutes of music, I think. I am really proud of this record; we spent a lot of time writing it and trying to craft together a real LP. We spent about six days on this recording, way more than I had ever done on any record. I also really spent a lot of time on the artwork, trying to really refine an aesthetic. I met the Coalition guys when we played with Das Oath at ABC No Rio in NYC. I was a really big fan of the label, and I really like their packaging and artwork. I gave them a copy of our record and basically it just went from there. Jeroen and Marcel are really wonderful people and extremely patient with all of my whining. I have a lot of respect for the fact that they put out music simply because they believe in it, regardless of whatever the trendy band or style of the moment is.

•MRR: How important is the look of a record to you? Surely what's on the inside counts more?

Adam: The look is not as important as the music, but the way we try to approach making records is that all the parts come together to express an idea. Miles, Jeremy, and I are "artists," so design is something that we're all interested in.

•MRR: Level Plane records put out your 7" entitled "I Felt Like Such a Loser Until I Realized I Am Already a Winner." Where did that come from? Is

it a quote or just a statement about how you as a band feel already? What's the inspiration behind the electronic tracks? Is that something you kids are into or is it just a mess-around?

Adam: I borrowed the "Loser" title from some religious tract that my girlfriend found. I thought it sorta summed up our kind of sarcastic and self-defeating attitude, not only as a band, but personally for me as well. Although I think that the other band members feel the same way, I wouldn't want to speak for them. I have a tendency to sort of put the band and myself down. It's a defense mechanism, I guess; call yourself a failure before someone else does. The electronic tracks are really just for fun. Most people just seem to be confused and irritated by them. I like making them, and I do like electronic music but I don't really listen to it. I seriously think they are cool and I am stoked when somebody likes them, though that isn't too often! Sometimes I think we shouldn't use them, but I sort of think of them as segues. I've always found so-called experimental rock to be really pretentious and sort of an emperor's new clothes. At the time we were making our first album, there was (and continues to be) a proliferation of ridiculous newwave/experimental/electronica/lo-fi/nowave/crappy/hipster/art-rock bands in NY, and I guess my point was that is totally easy and bullshit. Maybe I'm too reactionary. Maybe I smoke too much weed. I don't really take it seriously at all, but I do think they are cool and fun to make. I think you can tell a lot about critics by their reaction to them. I just don't know what it is that you can tell.

•MRR: Below the lyrics on that record, there is a set of five quotes that are numbered the same way the lyrics and tracks are; what do these relate to?

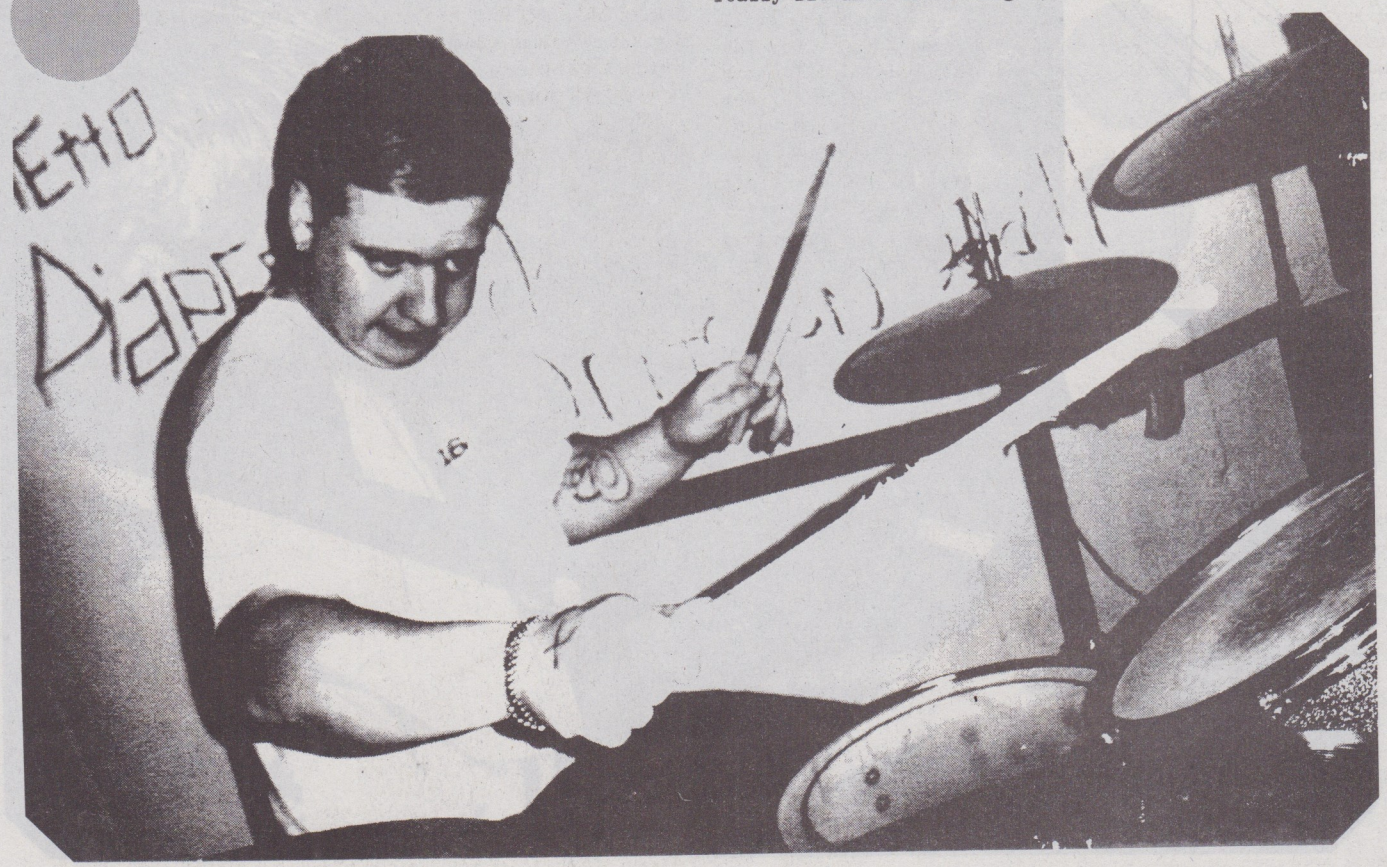
Adam: What we do is, if you look closely at our lyrics, the numbers correspond with the song order (they are designed as footnotes). It is a way for us to clarify and explain our lyrics a little bit more, because sometimes, it is difficult for us to communicate our ideas in the context of the songs as well as we'd like. At the same time, we don't think we need to spoon or force-feed listeners our ideas and beliefs (e.g., Tribal War or something), so it's a compromise.

•MRR: What was the first book to lie? Are you talking about the bible?

Adam: Yes, but there plenty of other examples.

•MRR: When playing or touring, what sort of bands are you playing out with? Do you get lumped with the Level Plane emo bands or do you fit in with the DIY hardcore scene? In New York, is there much of an overlap of the two scenes? How many DIY spaces are there available for shows in NY at the moment?

Adam: We sort of play with a pretty big variety of bands, though it tends to be of the more Post-Gravity/Ebullition variety. We do get to play with Level Plane bands, although not as much as I'd like. I actually do like almost all of that stuff, and even the stuff I don't love, I can appreciate because it is generally of some quality. That is actually sort of one of our touring problems, that we don't really fit into the straight, modern emo scene, nor are we



really embraced by the more straightforward hardcore/thrash scene. We don't really have a gimmick or easily fit into a genre. I guess we sort of get associated with things because of label affiliations, though I don't know how we fit into Level Plane or Coalition. I like a lot of the bands on those labels, but the acceptance of us or any other band based on a record label is fucking retarded. Unfortunately, it happens all the time, because hardcore kids are generally sheep. Hopefully, it is a given that we are a DIY hardcore band and, luckily, there seems to be enough crossover in the US and NYC for us to be able to get shows. Musically, I personally relate to bands like Transistor and Wolves, Scarlet Letter, and Light the Fuse and Run. But there are bands that are our friends, like Hot Cross, Celebrity Roast, and Off Minor, who we play with even though we are different musically.

The main DIY space in NY is still ABC No Rio. There are occasionally other alternative spaces, but the interest level in doing all ages shows seems WAY down from two years ago.

•MRR: You were in Your Adversary before Books Lie; I only have the 10" and the 7". What happened to that band? Is there any more material out there?

Adam: Your Adversary broke up in 1999, while Books Lie was just forming. Basically, without being totally vindictive, we did not get along anymore. Any other worthwhile Your Adversary material ended up being used on the first Books Lie LP.

•MRR: Last one: Who is to blame for all the nerds paying lots of money for records and not caring about punk rock anymore? Is it Saetia, Usurp Synapse, or Orchid?

Adam: Good question. I'll say Saetia for the whining and the internet-hype machinations, Orchid for the preening and skulls, but really the culprit is Usurp Synapse for being a complete piece of shit on record and as a band.

As a more serious answer, I can look at Saetia and Orchid, whether they are my friends or not, and despite some of my own personal criticisms or biases regarding these bands, there is artistic merit and passion to what they were doing. These guys were/are punks and most of them are still involved with DIY on some level. These aren't, to me, the most incredible records I have, but they are actual labors of love and you can't fake that. I look at Usurp Synapse/Jerome Dream and all that fashion-core garbage, and I see a bunch of guys who systematically used the internet, limited pressings, label jumping, image, hype, and a reputation as "jerks" to make a name for themselves. To what end? At the end of the day, the records don't carry anything and are forgettable, meaningless. I still listen to the Fuel LP once a month because it has substance, and that will resonate forever. That is what I want from hardcore. I don't mean to entirely single out those bands or whatever. I'm sure some of those guys are good people, that's just how I see the situation.

So in that sense, hyped-up bands like that, with nothing to really offer except a quick sugar fix, I think sort of hurt hardcore, because there was just nothing compelling enough about it to keep people interested, and once the blast beat finishes and the beehive hair gets cut off, it's all over, whereas something like, say, Rites of Spring, that's going to affect you for your whole life and keep you involved and interested. But the reality is, it's never the bands fault; it's the nerds on the internet and at shows, who buy into this crap and are a bunch of followers, who wait to see what band is "approved" and walk outside during a new band's set that isn't on the right label or whatever. I think Tony Pointless put it well with his statement, and this is very paraphrased: "Punk is a conscious rejection." Going to shows when I was 13 was scary, as late in the game as I was, and while violence isn't ever good, being a punk meant asserting yourself, as an individual in larger society, but also within the scene, to be accepted or you were going to be stomped mentally, and possibly physically. You didn't have to be a bruiser or get in a fight, but you had to stand up for yourself, and that encourages thinking for yourself. I don't think that exists anymore, and you get a bunch of meek lemmings in punk rock who just follow whatever the current trends are. And people like that would rather buy trendy records online than actually take the next step towards being a part of hardcore.

•MRR: Is there any sign of this tide of "cool" hardcore turning? In the UK, you look in the weekly music magazines and you see the Rev, Vagrant, Equal Vision, and even Bridge9 bands getting mainstream coverage. Do these same bands get hyped in the states as much?

Adam: Unfortunately, yes. Although, luckily, I pay less and less attention to music magazines, so I don't have to see it much anymore. I see no sign of the "cool" hardcore turning. There will always be dumb bandwagons, catch phrases, and fashion bands with nothing real to say except ass-loads of hype. But there are always good new bands that are sincere, so as long as something I really love like the Excelsior LPs make it into my sweaty hands once in a while, things will be okay. I guess at the end of the day I hope Books Lie can affect someone the way my favorite band have to me.

I would rather end this interview on a posi-tip: Empower yourself, have fun. Thanks.

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www.coalition-records.com

CHARM CITY ART SPACE

by Melissa Flanzraich
photos by Jon Soucy

There is a scene in the movie *Another State of Mind* that always made me laugh. Minor Threat plays a show at some space in Baltimore where tons of kids are going nuts. Someone makes a comment that Baltimore has got to be one of the next big scenes. Many people, including myself, who have been a part of the Baltimore punk scene for the past decade, can't help but start to crack up or at least give each other a knowing look when we hear that. That's because shows like the crazy Minor Threat performance in the movie have been hard to come by in recent years. But Baltimore turning out to be the new Berkeley or Orange County? Its barely even Long Island. For many years, there weren't more than a few venues doing punk or hardcore shows. And all ages shows, forget about it.

Here and there, DIY spaces have opened up, many offering amazing shows and awesome hangouts for a brief period of time, but almost all quickly had reasons to close up. Whether it was problems with landlords, police or impolite show goers breaking things or causing trouble. The few promising all ages show spaces, like the Sushi Café, the Bloodshed, The Small Intestine, Black Aggies and others, which opened in the city are now all gone, with only a few memorable shows to reminisce about. It always seemed that when there was something promising happening, it got closed down just when things were getting good.

But, a little over a year ago, a few veteran Baltimore all ages show promoters decided to try to change that. "We wanted to create a space for smaller bands to play. We have had a few great places to see bigger bands for years, but smaller venues come and go all the time. We wanted to create a small space that would last," said Mike Riley, one of the co-founders of the Charm City Art Space, a new DIY venue in the city.

Riley moved to Baltimore from New Jersey seven years ago and has been booking shows in the area just about ever since. While he has booked shows at clubs and bars, what he really wanted was to find a space in Baltimore where all ages shows could go on without the hassle of a club owner looking for money. Riley founded "The Chop Shop (aka The Supreme Imperial)" in the late 90s. The space, located on the second floor of a warehouse on Saratoga St. brought in big bands like Converge and Jimmy Eat World, but it also brought big crowds, which was something the local police weren't happy about. During a packed Boy Sets Fire show, the police and fire marshal raided the space, told everyone to leave, and closed the space for good.

Punk and hardcore kids in Baltimore were pissed. One of the only venues doing shows they wanted to see, got shut down. They had to return to matinee bar shows for a while. But in the past year, it seems that things may have turned around. Mike Riley ran into his friend Mike Wolf, another all ages show promoter and enthusiast, at another now defunct warehouse venue, The Bloodshed. They talked to the kids who ran that space and started getting together some ideas.

"Mike and I had talked several times about how there was no collectively run DIY space in Baltimore. It being the land of cheap things, it just didn't make sense," said Mike Wolf.

When they found a storefront for rent in the paper last summer, they went to look at it, and immediately signed a lease.

But the two Mikes didn't want to have just any DIY show space, or collective, they wanted to create a community around the scene. They wanted a venue to be the center, with a meeting place for those involved. So the two decided to have the space run by a group of members, not just a select few. Membership was opened up to anyone who wanted to be involved, whether that be booking shows, helping out at shows, giving ideas or just coming out to see bands. Membership dues range from working to donations to monthly or yearly memberships for people who want to book shows at the space.

"Whether someone makes a one time large donation, works every show or comes to two meetings. They are a valued asset to the space," said JT Townsend, who came to the Charm City Art Space, after he had to stop doing shows in his rental townhouse. "I was actively looking for a venue, when the two Mikes approached me. I was in from the start."

When word spread to friends and promoters in the area, several people were immediately interested in becoming involved in the space. Before they knew it, they had an average membership of twenty to twenty-five people. Ten or so of these people come to meetings and help staff shows regularly.

I met with several of the core members, who are present at the biweekly meetings, on a Tuesday night in January, expecting much of the same thing I had always seen at the long gone DIY venues of Baltimore's past. When I walked up to the door, I wasn't surprised by my first impressions. The venue, on Northern Avenue, looks like an old store reminiscent of the long gone, but famed, Baltimore show space/record store Sound Exchange. A quilt of old punk patches covered the front door, and as I opened the door, I realized that there was no heat. About ten people showed up for this meeting. Although, it might have been more if it was not the night President Bush was going to give his big impending war speech, which everyone was interested in watching on the old static signaled TV in the corner. Some people were interested in hearing what he had to say; oth-

ers were just interested in making fun or whatever he said.

The room is filled with a diverse group of people, both guys and girls ranging from their late teens to late twenties. A few of them, like both Mikes have been booking shows for years. Others, like 28 year-old high school Spanish teacher Jim Ventosa, hadn't booked a show in six years. Many of them come from the hardcore scene in and around Baltimore, but Ventosa is quick to point out that the space is meant for all types of music. "I think Baltimore/DC are very genre specific scenes. You don't get a ton of shows where 'watch me point my finger at your hooded sweatshirt' guys are playing with 'my pants are too tight and my hair is too long, rocker types.' So you don't get to meet a lot of people outside our over-categorized scene of choice. But we've got a few people at Charm City Art Space from each sub genre."

"We try not to typecast and/or be genre specific, which I think has been the downfall of many potentially great venues," said JT Townsend.

The layout of the space is two levels; the shows take place in the basement, while the upstairs is used for an art gallery/library/meeting space. The upstairs is one of the things that those involved in the space are proud of. It's one way the space is definitely not your typical DIY venue.

The Charm City Art Space is not just a place to see bands. Those involved in the space want to make sure that it's a center for all things involving DIY culture. The space's mission statement makes clear that the member's intentions are for it to be more than just another show space. "Our goals are to act as a creative outlet for DIY performance, music and art and to work as a center for independent though, constructive discussion and creative expression."

"We wanted smaller artists to be able to show their work," said Mike Riley, who has been heavily influenced by another DIY venture, the Mr. Roboto Project in Pittsburgh. "I think that most DIY venues run by punk/hardcore/indie kids seem to only focus on the music, and we are part of the minority that tries to bring in other forms of art."

Photographs by local artists filled the upstairs walls with pictures of shows at the space, self-portraits, and pictures of children. The space also has art nights. They have had art openings, film nights, as well as spoken word poetry nights.

"I think my favorite event so far was the screening of *Straight Outta Hunters Point*, a DIY documentary made about one of the ghettos outside of San Francisco. I think it was one of the most diverse and educational events we've had so far at the space," said Miguel Rodriquez. He is currently working on setting up a zine and book library at the space. It currently includes an interesting variety of books about everything from animal rights and Ralph Nader, to a book about Gary Coleman (which, the kids at CCAS want to point out, was actually recently stolen) and a set of children's encyclopedias.

"I was intrigued by the plan to use the space for more than just shows," said Jim Ventosa, the high school teacher. "The older I get, the less in touch I am with the scene. I wanted something that kept me involved."

The space has also had some interesting theme shows, as well as stunts. On a night that Jello Biafra was speaking across the street from the space, they devised a plan to try to get him, as well as, people seeing him speak, come over to the show at Charm City Art Space. They made up flyers that said "Free Jello," with a picture of Jello Biafra on it. At the bottom, it said "No really, we have free vegan jello across the street," with arrows pointing to the art space. Needless to say, it wasn't successful in getting Jello to come over, but it made for a memorable event.

The organizers of the space are also thinking of doing other unusual things like a punk rock aerobics night, as well as spoken word poetry nights, along with more benefits and fundraisers.

Although the space has been successful thus far, they aren't taking any chances. Another way the Charm City Art Space is trying to deviate from the norm of DIY venues is the fact they are looking into becoming a legitimate entity, either as a non-profit or an art gallery. Its one thing they all agreed was at the top of their priorities for the future.

"We hope to go legit in the near future. We are looking into all our options to find out what will work best for what we are trying to do," said Mike Riley. They are looking into getting the right permits, as well as trying to talk to lawyers to make sure they do it right. Maybe that way, the space will be able to stay around a little longer that the usual DIY venue.

"I think that we would all like to be a true non-profit space and not have to worry about trivial things such as getting thrown out or what not," said JT Townsend.

Mike Wolf agrees, "That's our ultimate goal: to become a completely legitimate alternative music and arts venue." But above all else, he says, make no mistakes; the Charm City Art Space is, at the core, a DIY show space. "It is very much in the tradition of DIY collective venues." The space is a drug and alcohol free venue, and although they don't take any specific political standpoints, they embrace many shared ideas. The Charm City Art Space's mission statement says that an important part of the venue is, "To focus our energies as a buffer, to filter out negative influences including, but not limited to: racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ageism, violence and judgmental fundamentalism."

It's this DIY tradition that Mike Wolf wants to share with kids in Baltimore, who may have missed out on such a culture in the past few years. "Some of the kids who come to shows don't know about the culture of basement shows/DIY spaces because they learned about punk through Hot Topic. I wanted to give back to a culture that gave so much to me."

"In the beginning, I just took what I could from the scene unappreciatively. But over the years, I've come to feel that I should give back. It feels very rewarding to contribute to something like this," said JT Townsend.

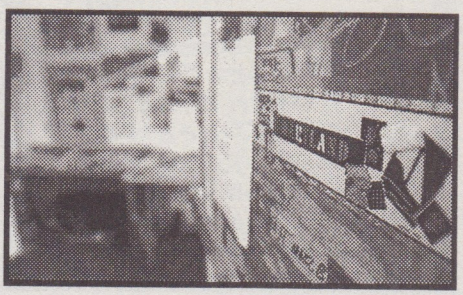
So that scene in *Another State of Mind*, it made some of us laugh, but I guess it also made some people think. When asked what his idea of a dream show at the space was, he said simply, "a Minor Threat reunion."

Mike Wolf recalled one of his favorite Charm City Art Space memories was while trying to fix a broken toilet in the basement of the space and getting covered in sewage. He yelled, "You don't think Ian MacKaye gets covered with shit do you? If it weren't for him, we would have lived normal lives, we would be at home watching TV, not covered in shit in the basement of a DIY space." Maybe it's because of that scene and those bands, that some people in Baltimore are trying to recreate what was once very prominent, so they can be a part of it themselves.

"Places like this can still exist; use you resources, in the words of Billy Bragg, 'Start your own revolution and cut out the middle man'," Mike said. Even if something goes wrong, if the space gets shut down or they lose their lease, he feels the venue is creating something that will continue after this DIY venue is gone. "I see the space more in the sense of building a community. If the foundation is still there, we move on and start again."

If you live in the Baltimore area and are interested in getting involved with the space, Miguel Rodriguez says, "Please do. It's all comfort and no pressure. We have biweekly meetings that are open to whoever is interested. Come make some friends."

For more info on the Charm City Art Space, visit www.ccspace.org



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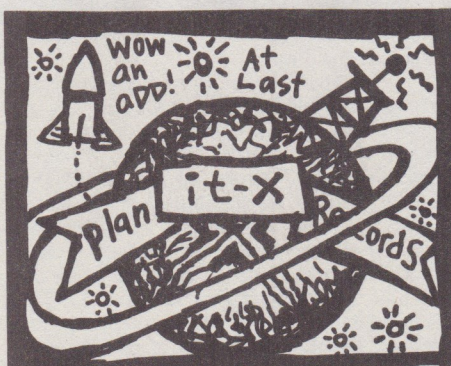

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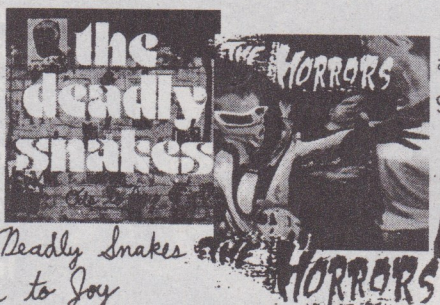

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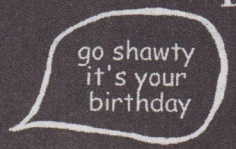

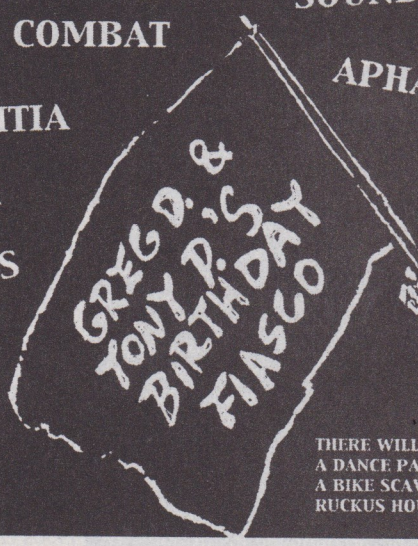

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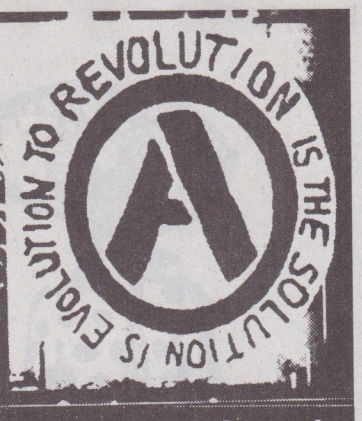

From the depths of the notorious New Jersey anarchist cornmunity comes Hopeless Dregs of Humanity. For three years now, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity has been developing its own unique brand of uncompromising, "balls to the wall," high-energy hard rock that isn't afraid to be intelligent and fun at the same time. Whether it's yelling at their audience, blowing fireballs, setting amps on fire, or destroying equipment, their live shows are causing stirs wherever they go. Yet at the same time, the band is also being accredited with turning many young people into bonafide anarchists. Their new CD, Revolutionary Rock Apocalypse, is out now on Ever Reviled Records. Indeed, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity are creating a revolutionary rock apocalypse of their own. Interview by Jon McGhee.

MRR: Tell me, briefly, the one or two things about the band that you worry people might miss out on when they see you play.

Deicide: You know, we make a deliberate effort not to turn our shows into lectures, so there are a million different thmgs that I personally would love to say but never have the chance to. At the very minimum, though, I hope that Hopeless Dregs of Humanity is helping people to look at the central authorities in American society and question their legitimacy. The corporate-owned media in America is a podium for the political and economic elites in our country. If people took the time to fnd information that wasn't from those sources, I think they would find that the US government is doing some incredibly atrocious things in our name. And then, I think, Americans would be questioning the very basis of what this sham democracy means to us. And if there is ever an ethos to take from Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, it's that the time is now for action...the sort of action that will move us towards meaningful democracy. It's time to fucking rock. We hope our music can be a driving force to inspire you to start creating this revolution. Rock & roll has always been a driving force in pushing the boundaries of what is acceptable. Nowadays, rock has been hijacked by an industry that's trying to sterilize it into a corporate-friendly product. We're hoping to help bring rock back towards somethmg more than just Britney Spears with guitars and a different image. We're hoping to give it more meaning than just music.

T-Dawg: I would probably say that people miss out on the fact that we're not just musicians, we are extremely active in grassroots organizing to take down coercive, oppressive, social institutions and build directly democratic, accountable institutions. We don't just want to entertain the audience. We want to march down the streets with members of the audience as we set our minds towards creating a more sustainable future. One based on the principles of mutual aid, direct democracy, and consensus decision-making. A freely associating society—one anarchistic in nature.

Evil: When we sing about being wage-slaves, it's because we are. You get tired of being told to be grateful for the same old shit, so you got to do something about it. Our own experiences are similar to the audiences', but it can get overlooked on stage.

MRR: Hopeless Dregs of Humanity haven't explored hardcore too much, as far as I can tell. Are there any reasons why you're not writing that music, or thoughts on hard music as opposed to less-hard music, as far as audience reached?

T-Dawg: We try not to write music that's in danger of being pigeon-holed into a subculture which has turned more into a cool white kids club in the last decade. A lot of hardcore fits the same description with subtle nuances of difference. It's as if people were reading an

owner's manual on hardcore. The one characteristic which I think is the most detrimental for the message, if you're in a progressive band, is when the audience is finished listening to the CD or just saw your show and they have no clue what you were yelling or screaming about. The words go in one ear and out the other. That doesn't inspire anyone. Within certain limits, the less hard the vocals are, the wider and more popular base for appeal the band's message has. The subculture of what created hardcore shouldn't be about elitism. It should be welcoming.
Personally, I think we want to appeal to anyone who has ever felt the energy of rock & roll and the need for social change.

MRR: For the kids that really dig your band, can you tell us which bands out now you really identify with the most? Which current bands are most similar in belief and practice to Hopeless Dregs of Humanity?

Deicide: Wow, that's a good question. From my point of view, a counterculture really has been lacking, so the bands are a bit few and far between. However, I really see signs that it's getting bigger. I'm just waiting for the motherfucking seam to bust. Of course, our comrades in Give Us Barabbas are great. I really dig Against Me too. I also really like some of the shit that's been coming out of hip-hop culture. If there were a band too similar to us, though, I just don't think we'd be doing what we set out to do.
Evil: Propagandhi has been doing great things for years. The most recent CD I picked up and said, "this kicks ass" was Against Me's *Reinventing Axl Rose.*
T-Dawg: I would have to say that I identify with bands like Disaster Strikes (Boston), Dance Emma Dance (Boston), Chainsaw Little Kids (NJ), Communist Conspiracy Rhythms (WI), and the internationally known Propagandhi, but even the ex-Rage Against The Machine are very similar in belief and practice to what we are. I don't know if Rage was directly democratic internally like we are, but some of those guys definitely kicked ass when it came to direct action. Huh!

MRR: To cut to the chase, your band is an anti-capitalist band that condones revolution. As individuals, you've participated in symbolic acts of protest such as large demonstrations, as well as more direct acts of revolution such as Food Not Bombs. How effective do you think large-scale protests are in actually promoting change and why?

Evil: Condones is an understatement. Mass actions are only as effective as people are willing to make them. Seattle in '99 made dissent tangible again. It changed the structure of protest and broke the spell for many of us, saying that it's possible to change things yourself through direct action. Saying "shame on you for fucking us over" is not effective. Stopping them from fucking you over is effective.
Deicide: I think that they've been extremely effective. I've been organizing in the anarchist movement for almost six years now, and in that time I've seen tremendous momentum, especially after the Seattle action against the WTO. The costs for the global corporate dictators to hold their events has been brutal on them, to the point where they can only find refuge in remote areas or in countries with violently oppressive governments. Their backs are against the wall. On an international scale, the changes have been wonderful. Beyond the eyes of America's corporate-owned media, the international social revolution has been moving against these institutions for awhile. People of South America, the Philippines, Mexico, Africa, etc., have all been organizing direct action for the past 20 years, almost. The major difference for them is that it is part of their survival and not really as much of a choice as it is for Americans. For them to know that revolutionary consciousness has made its way even into the homeland of these multinationals I'm sure has been enormously inspirational.
T-Dawg: Large scale demonstrations show an individual that they are very much not alone in their social interest, when they see a few hundred to many thousands of other people in the streets. It's a kick in the pants to look up the street and see a sea of people holding flags and banners with the purpose of symbolically and/or directly resisting, to get a tighter grip on their own lives without the malignant control mechanisms of corporate-backed state terrorism. It's a warm, fuzzy feeling, deep in your gut. Even in one of the most affluent nations in the world, America, it's a wonder to see such a huge display of working class solidarity participating in a counter-culture against corporate globalization, while simultaneously working to build a democratically structured international economy. The important fact is, though, that change happens locally, and must first be focused locally. If not, you don't have a firm foundation, then the rest of your movement will crumble, and totalitarianism is only a few more tax dollars away. Totalitarianism is Hitler, is George W. Bush's wet dream, is Enron's ménage-a-trois with Cheney and George W., and it is working class people getting robbed blind of the fruits of their labor, their human rights, and their dignity. It can snowball when unchecked, but so can a revolution of organized freedom-loving people. We need broad, popular resistance to institutions of domination, and local solidarity devoted to creating the world we are struggling for. Communication is key. Large-scale protests are extremely effective, but we also need to see past that. A movement needs both introspection and global perspective. A movement needs to know its history. Then when you see thousands of people around you, no longer satisfied by handouts of reform, your blood starts pumpin' and you feel truly alive.

MRR: Would you agree that "anarchist/anti-globalist" art/culture is kind of stagnating and becoming dogmatic in the fashion that the underground culture of Marxist/ Leninists has? If so, what can we do to avoid becoming utterly regimented and boring?

T-Dawg: I would partially disagree. I have witnessed a diverse amount of beautiful visual and musical creation within the anarchist/anti-corporate globalization culture. People like Seth Tobocman, Catherine Moon, Robert Blake, Keith Herring, Mike McClean; bands like Submission Hold; people from the Art and Revolution Collective (CA), from the Beehive Collective (ME), and thousands of others are revolutionaries who keep the pulse in the anarchist culture throbbing. Of course we could always use more visual creationists doing things in newer, flashier, brighter, and more unorthodox ways. People need to constantly reinvent themselves, like in America in the 60s.
Deicide: I haven't had a sense of stagnation or dogmatism in the new movement. If anarchism ever becomes a program, doctrine, or practice that is permanent then it has become an oxymoron. At its broadest base, I think anarchism is a historical perspective on the development of democracy applied to the present in the hopes of building the most direct democracy for the future. For these reasons, I think anarchism by its nature will never be all that regimented or boring. If it was, it would just cease being anarchism, then, wouldn't it?
Evil: Avoid CrimethInc. Just kidding. Actually, I disagree. The problem with most Marxist-Leninists is that they're boring people. Name one good Stalinist band...they get trapped in jargon and dogma and forget about how to be free and have fun. If I can't rock, it's not my revolution.

MRR: Any other favorite zines, magazines, bands, artists, writers, websites you'd like to plug or recommend?

Deicide: *Blue Zine* rules! You know I love ya John! I write for *Impact Press,* and also think that it is one of the more underrated journalistic zines out now. I also really like *Clamor.* It's very well done. And of course, Independent Media Center is a great example of democratic media. Like I said before, I'm a strong supporter of democratic workplaces. There are some great ones popping up locally. *Barricada* puts out an awesome mag. Also, there's AK Press, which is an inspiration for worker collectives.
T-Dawg: I'd say check out the Northeastern Federation of Anarchist Communism (www.flag.blackened.net/nefac), read the *Northeastern Anarchist,* a semi-annual publication of that federation; read some things by the CrimethInc. Collective; virtually anything by Emma Goldman; a book called *Manufacturing Consent* by Edward S. Herman & Noam Chomsky, or anything by Chomsky for that matter; *Revolution of Conscience* by Greg Moses, *Another World Is Possible* (anotherworldispossible.net), *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon, www.indymedia.org, and of course, www.everreviledrecords.com/hopelessdregs.
Evil: Read *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell.

MRR: In all honesty, tell one or two things you feel you will never forget about your experience in this band.

T-Dawg: I will probably never ever forget the joy of endless conversations while on tour kicking America's ass, and the constant dumb-kid weiner jokes about the song "My Dick Is Too Small".
Deicide God damn, don't write our obituaty already! We will be fucking rockn' until somebody buries us...and even then they'll have trouble keeping us down.
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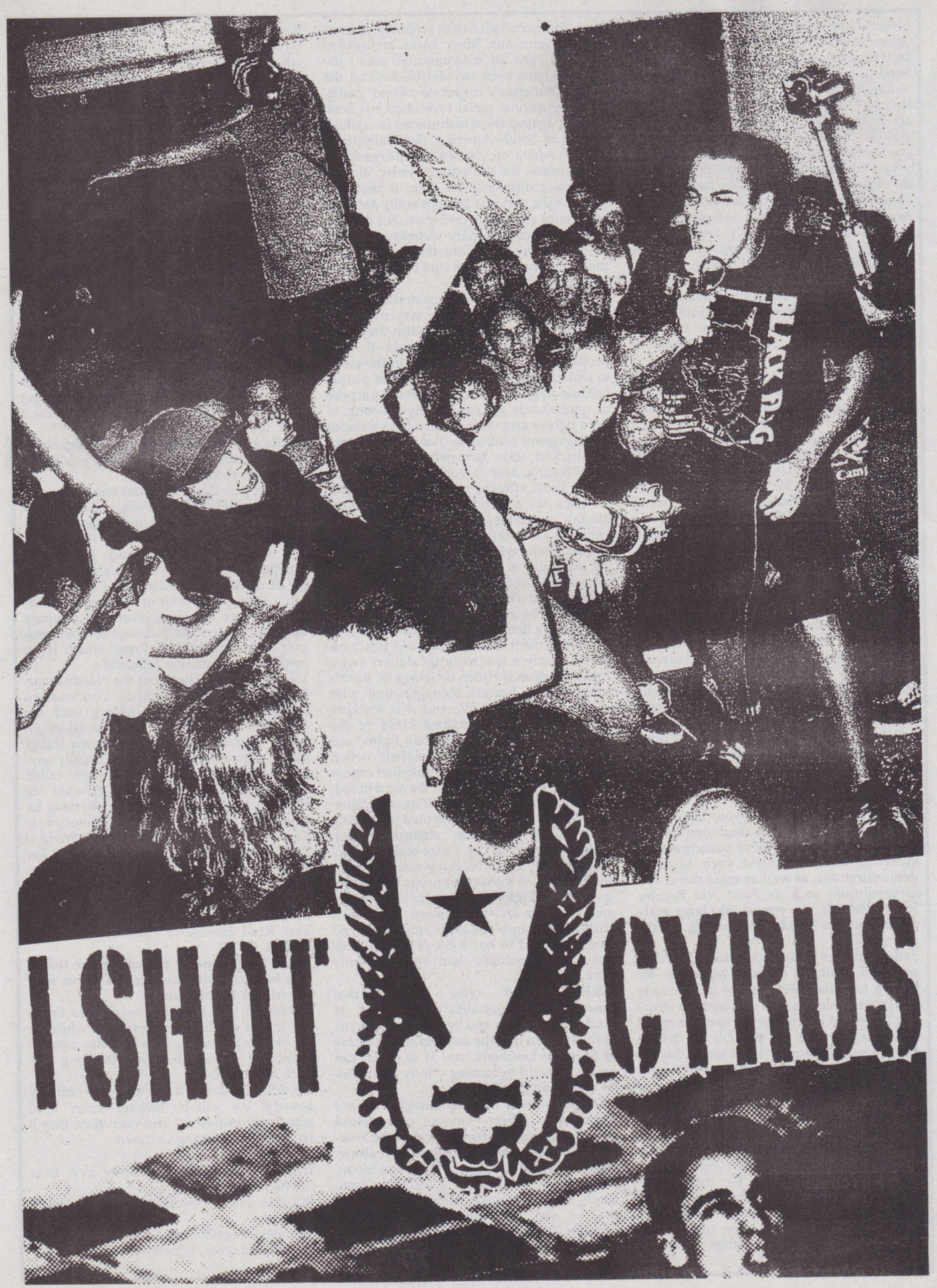

BLACK FLAG
I SHOT CYRUS

MRR: Probably most people over here haven't heard that much about you as a band, therefore it might make sense to introduce yourselves first. How did I Shot Cyrus get started, how did you develop, music-wise, and what projects are the band members involved in besides I Shot Cyrus?

Hey! We're the hardcore band I Shot Cyrus, from Sao Paulo, Brazil. We first started in 1997, as a project between members of Point Of No Return and Newspeak, who wanted to play fast and simple hardcore. In the first practices, we were kind of doing a Chain Of Strength/No For an Answer thing, although we always played it faster. But after a couple of months we got bored and started to play even faster and write angrier, punkier songs. The neo-youth crew thing was becoming big and most of the bands were not very good, didn't have the same anger as the original ones, and a whole cult/stereotype was developing, which we didn't follow. And what was the point of having a band that sounded like a million others? It wasn't fun or challenging.

So, we started adding other influences in the mix, especially European bands and early 80s American stuff, and started playing faster and heavier. Our first phase is documented in the *Thrashmaster* comp, which is an LP from 1999 with other bands like Infect, Discarga, etc. After we recorded the *Thrashmaster* songs in '99, our first drummer left the band and we invited our friend, Pierre, to play drums for us. Pierre wasn't really a drummer (although he also played drums for a band called Insanus), so he had a very unique style, which consisted mainly of just being able to play semi-blast beats and nothing slower than that, kind of like Lärm or something. So, we were forced to drop some songs and adapt the possible ones to his ultra-fast beats. It was a great thing, because our first drummer couldn't really play as fast as I'd like him to.

So, we started writing more extreme-sounding stuff, having his crazy drum style in mind. That's when we really started to sound original, I think. We recorded more songs with Pierre in 2001, which came out in comps and split releases in Brazil and Europe. And then he also left the band in 2002, and I called Boka to replace him. It was great, because Boka's been playing drums for centuries and recorded tons of records with Ratos de Porao (a great old hardcore band from Brazil), so he's one hell of a drummer. His ability to play anything gave us freedom to write all kinds of songs, and that's what we did on the new record we recorded this year. Now we can play all kinds of different tempos, and it makes it more exciting. So now, we (and our other bands) are:

Kalota (vocals, also in Point Of No Return)
Pedro (guitar, no other famous bands, except as a substitute guitarist in Point Of No Return whenever someone can't make it to gigs)
Tatiana (bass, Infect and No Violence)
Boka (drums, Ratos de Porao)

MRR: What do you think about the whole bandana thrash/80s revival thing? Do you feel like you're a part of it?

I thought it was really cool when it first started. We thought we were alone doing that, and then the *Bandana Thrash* comp came out and we suddenly found out we were in league with other bands from all over the world. It was a great relief from the neat, clean and overproduced hardcore that dominated the 90s, and much angrier and more creative than the neo-youth crew phenomenon, and of course it doesn't glorify dumbness and apathy, like part of the this "neo-old school" thing seems to do.

Everything becomes just another stereotype after a while, though, which sucks. We don't wear these "special" clothes so we can look a certain way, and we certainly don't try to sound a certain way so we can be part of a trend. Some people don't even realize that this whole bandana thing was supposed to be a joke. It's kind of ridiculous when hardcore bands just emulate something that already happened, just like a rockabilly band or something. Whatever was new, exciting, or even shocking in 1983, is obviously not the same nowadays. But the essence, which is what really matters, the energy and the basic idea of pissed off kids yelling their discontent over fast and angry music, is timeless! And that's what we do. Instead of pretending we're in the 80s, we take the elements that made us excited about it in the first place and recycle them into something similar, but adapted to our current epoch. So, are 80s bands our main influence? Yes. Do we try to sound like we're from 1983? No. We leave revivals for the rockabilly and mod scenes, we prefer to recycle, ha-ha.

MRR: You'll be on tour through Europe in August. Could you please explain your feelings concerning this upcoming trip? What are your expectations?

I really don't know what to expect. On one hand, two of us have been there twice with Point Of No Return, and another one has been there more than ten times with Ratos de Porao. But on the other hand, we've never been there with I Shot Cyrus and we're still pretty much unknown there. I expect to see many friends again, as well as to meet other cool people. I think people who like our other bands (Point Of No Return, Ratos de Porao and Infect) will like I Shot Cyrus, musically and/or lyrically, but then, I'm not counting on huge shows or anything like that, since it's our first time there and we just had our first full-length record out. I know that not many people know us, but at the same time I hope we're a pleasant surprise to them. And I also expect to have tons of fun, because we love touring and we love each other and our European helpers.

MRR: Most of you have been in Europe before. What were your impressions and how does HC over here differ from HC in Brazil? In Europe (as well as in the US, probably) it seems like huge parts of "the scene" get absorbed, or at least infiltrated, by capitalist corporations. Companies like Eastpack (the US Air Force's main provider of bags) are sponsoring metal/HC fests like Pressure Fest and are not only welcomed with open arms by the organizers, but also tolerated by 90% of the kids, who don't even see what's wrong with all this. I guess it's totally different in Brazil, right? South America seems to me like one of the rare regions were hardcore can still be considered a counter-culture with the aim of smashing capitalism and all other forms of exploitation and oppression. Is this really the case or am I over-optimistic here?

I believe it's the case if you're talking about the DIY scene we're part of. But there's also a more mainstream, more commercial and totally apolitical scene, with the same kind of values as anywhere else I think. The special thing here is that this DIY/political hardcore scene is really big and we're able to do shows for 1000 people without security, with low door prices, no sponsors, and with political discussions and talks between bands, all organized by the kids themselves on a totally non-profit basis. But then, not everybody in this scene is involved or even very interested in politics, and among the people that are, there are also different kinds of politics. There are many different kinds of people, and I don't think that's bad, it's just natural. The difference here is that a fest like the Pressure Fest, with corporate sponsors and shit, wouldn't feature the same bands and audience as the DIY shows. Overall, I think we're doing a good thing here, but of course we have the idiots and the apathetic people, just like anywhere else.

MRR: Are a lot of hardcore kids involved in radical resistance activities? What kind of struggles are you involved in and what are some recent developments you'd like us to know about? Maybe you could also recommend us some websites where we could get further information about the political situation in Brazil and South America.

Yes, many punk/HC kids are involved in political activities. If you go to any demonstration that the so-called anti-capitalist movement participates in, you'll see lots of punk/HC kids. The Indy Media Center here is also full of HC kids, and so are many other groups. We, collectively, in the scene, try to keep in touch with the international struggles, as well as local ones. We organize a periodical show called the "Verdurada," where we always have someone to talk about political issues between bands. Recently, for instance, we did stuff about the crisis in Argentina, the war in Iraq, genetically modified foods, and so on. We've also had people from all kinds of Brazilian movements, like the Landless Workers Movement, the Homeless Movement, etc. There's a place, for instance, called "Acampamento Anita Garibaldi," which is an autonomous settlement formed by the Homeless Movement, where they live and work, grow food and do political work as well, and we help them as much as we can with food we collect at shows and different kinds of political support. Recently we were also supposed to play a show in a demonstration against the nomination of a former torturer from the military dictatorship as chief of the police force's department of intelligence.

Tatiana is in a Marxist group called "Estrategia Revolucionaria," Boka is in his city's local anarchist collective, and Pedro and Kalota aren't members of any organization now, but they have been in the past; they support and participate in the anti-capitalist movement and occasionally join organizations in specific struggles. And, of course, the band itself can be regarded as a form of resistance activity, although nothing's gonna change if we just sing about it.

The best websites in English about local struggles I can think of are the English part of the Sao Paulo Indy Media site (http://www.midiaindependente.org/en/blue/) and the Landless Workers Movement (http://www.mstbrazil.org/).

"IT'S REALLY HARD FOR PEOPLE TO SURVIVE HERE, EVEN IF YOU HAVE A GOOD EDUCATION IT'S HARD TO GET A JOB, AND IF YOU DO, YOU PROBABLY WON'T GET PAID VERY WELL IF, LIKE MOST PEOPLE, YOU DON'T HAVE AN EDUCATION AND LEFT SCHOOL TO START WORKING BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL, THEN YOU'RE PRETTY MUCH SCREWED AND YOUR LIFE WILL CONSIST OF SPENDING THREE HOURS A DAY CANNED INSIDE A CROWDED BUS, WORK FOR EIGHT HOURS IN A SHITTY JOB, AND THEN GET JUST ENOUGH MONEY TO EAT RICE AND BEANS AND PAY RENT IN A REALLY VIOLENT AND FAR AWAY NEIGHBORHOOD CONTROLLED BY BANDITS AND CORRUPT POLICEMEN."

MRR: One of you is female, which is a great and relieving fact in a scene that is so fucking male-dominated. Could you please tell us about the involvement of wimmin in the Brazilian Scene and the sexism they're confronted with? Is it as bad as here in Europe, where bands, distros, labels, booking etc. is done by men in 95 of 100 cases, where men are reducing wimmin to bodyparts on message-boards, and even threatening feminist-activists with violence and rape? Is there anything like that in Brazil and how do you deal with it (e.g. at shows)?

Here in Brazil something interesting happens. At any shows it's easy to see equal numbers of men and women. I think it's great, since eight years ago, when I started getting involved with the sXe scene, there were less than ten girls, and at punk gigs it wasn't very different. I play in three bands myself, Infect, which is formed only by girls, No Violence (I'm the only girl in the band), and I Shot Cyrus. The guitar player in Infect also plays (with boys) in another band called War Inside and the drummer is starting another all-girl band. There's another all girl band called Suicidio Quimico in another city called Curitiba playing ultra-fast hardcore. There's Austero, with 2 girls, Em Chamas and Abuso Sonoro (a pretty old and well known band) with female singers, and many others. There are lots of women expressing themselves in many ways. Some girls rather do zines, others take pictures, others only participate in political activities, others organize DIY events. But regardless, in comparison with the numbers of girls going to shows, there are still not many bands with female participation. It's sad, because there are really *many* girls who could do more that just be mere spectators. I think they're a little bit scared of "risking their asses," taking a fucking instrument and learning it, starting a band, even if it's gonna suck in the beginning. Sometimes I ask friends why they don't start a band, and they say: "because I can't play." Fuck, who was born already knowing how to play??? Learn it, damn it! Men aren't born with a special talent for music just because they're men.

About the sexism, it sucks to get up onstage and hear guys screaming you're "hot," or asking you to take your clothes off. It's really gross. From my personal experience, what I can say is that we always react in these cases, at least when we can hear it. When we didn't hear it, other people who hear it have done a good job at stopping them and making them feel bad about it. But it doesn't happen very often, fortunately.

What happens the most is people talking shit about the personal lives of more active girls, and believe it or not, it's other girls who do most of the gossiping! Often, they're more sexist than men, unfortunately. Having your life "investigated" and discussed by members of "the scene" ends up being the price to pay for leaving a passive position of expecting other people to do stuff in your place and only be the guys' girlfriends and watchers.

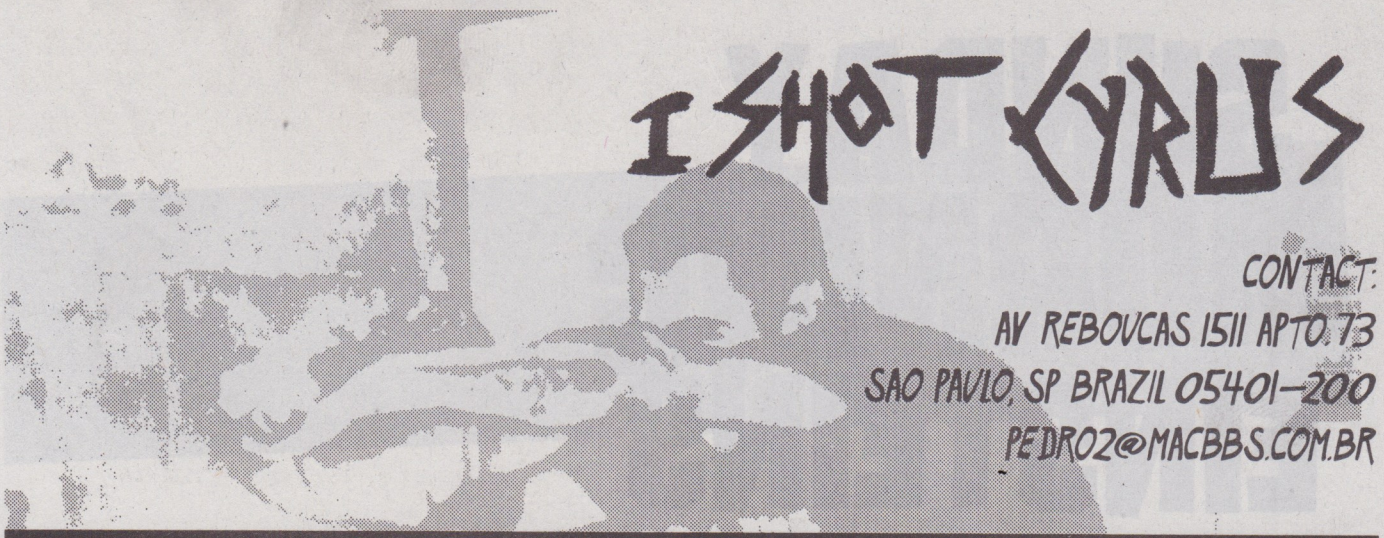
As far as I know, these threats of rape don't happen here. Though some weeks ago I heard about a girl having her "intimate parts" rubbed against her will at a hardcore show in another city. I was surprised and full of hate! And if that wasn't enough, the girl had to face the people's reaction (which, unfortunately didn't surprise me much). Some retards even said that the guy wouldn't have done it if she didn't want it!

Another thing that happens is scumbag boyfriends who beat up their girlfriends. Yes, I'm talking about hardcore kids. We have a song about it in I Shot Cyrus, called "Na Lamina da Faca" (On the blade of the knife—it's about women taking violent revenge against abusive men). Some are even well known, even playing in bands with lyrics against household violence. It's really complicated to deal with it, because in almost every case the girl is too ashamed to talk about it. And therefore, it's really hard to know who's getting beat up. Imagine that, in a scene where 99% of the girls consider themselves as feminists. Admiting you get beat up by your boyfriend is not an easy thing. I believe the first step is admiting things aren't going on as they should and stop depending on the guy. Stop believing it happen "just this time." There are no collectives, as far as I know, that helps hardcore/punk girls who've been beat up by boyfriends. The stories I know are all from my own experience and from people I know. What I can't tell you is that in Infect only, three girls have been through it, which makes me wonder what many more girls are going through. We have lyrics and lyrics on the subject, and that's what we do. It's very complicated. When I see a girl with purple stains on her face, I usually stare at the boyfriend a lot and look at the girl, willing to talk to her. But I don't know, it's weird to come to someone you've never talked to before and say "do this, do that." So anyway, I hope our music gives them a little bit of strength to people who go through this.

MRR: Although I heard that it's so much harder to run a band (getting equipment e.g.) in South America then here, there seem to be a lot of dedicated and amazing bands there. Does the scene mainly consist of privileged middle-class kids or are people from "lower" classes involved as well? How hard is it for poor people to survive and how is Brazil's wealth distributed? Small upper-class, huge amount of poor people, and a richer working-class and middle-class in between?

Years ago, hardcore in Brazil was composed mainly of working class people. Nowadays, with the popularization of punk, there are a higher percentage of middle class people. It's hard to talk about this to Europeans, because in Brazil someone who earns 300 Euros a month can be pretty much middle class, or at least a well paid working class person, and although São Paulo and the south are much richer, in the whole country, only 20% of the people earn more than 500 Reais (166 Euros (which is about $166)) a month. So even a "lower middle class" person in Sao Paulo is richer than 80% of the whole population of the country... I don't need to mention that Brazil has one of the worst wealth distributions in the world, with some *very* rich people, a shrinking middle class and a huge mass of poor people. In the regions with strong hardcore scenes, there are proportionally more middle class people and a more specialized working class. But in the countryside in the northern regions, class division is absurd and there's an even bigger difference between rich and poor.

But yes, there are plenty of "lower class" people involved in hardcore/punk, it's not just a rich kid thing. In the Marxist definition, most hardcore kids in Brazil are "upper working class" or middle



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class (from lower to upper), with some very poor people and a few (not many though) rich people.

It's really hard for people to survive here, even if you have a good education it's hard to get a job, and if you do, you probably won't get paid very well. If, like most people, you don't have an education and left school to start working before high school, then you're pretty much screwed and your life will consist of spending three hours a day canned inside a crowded bus, work for eight hours in a shitty job, and then get just enough money to eat rice and beans and pay rent in a really violent and far away neighborhood controlled by bandits and corrupt policemen. And you better pray not to lose your job, because it could get even worse than that. Right now, about 20% of the people are unemployed in São Paulo, and which is about three million people. Talk about potential criminals...

MRR: It seems to work quite fine for South American bands touring Europe. At least a fair amount of kids get you the support and recognition you deserve. What about European bands touring South America? So far only huge bands like Heaven Shall Burn and quite well known ones like Vitamin X or Highscore have had the chance to get over there, but there are so many other awesome bands who would love visiting you as well and I'm quite sure the kids would love them (maybe even more than the bands named before) as they consider themselves part of a counter-culture just like most South American kids seem to do. Do you think less known European bands could count on your help as Marcos Liberation was promising at several shows when Point of no Return have been here last summer?

Yes, for sure! Most of the times the bands that come are not well known here anyway. Heaven Shall Burn, Vitamin X and Highscore for instance, didn't come here because they were well know. They came here and them became well know. Most kids here aren't so aware of what goes on in the European scene anyway, so whatever bands that are good, have something good to say and are not assholes, can play great shows here and have a great time. The only problem, of course, is money. Our currency is way cheaper than the Euro, so it's going to be really cheap for you to buy stuff here, travel around, eat, etc. but you won't make a lot of money. If the bands look at it as some kind of musical vacation and don't expect to make money, it's always going to be a thrill!

MRR: Marcos Liberation told me that you guys were starting an organization fighting for the rights of non-human animals last year. How is this developing? I guess it must be really hard trying to convince people that they should consider the rights of non-human animals when they're totally occupied with their everyday struggle for survival.

Yeah, Marcos was starting it, with help from other kids, but it's hard to get the organization legalized, which is something he wants to do, so he's still raising money and support for it. Yes, it's hard to convince people to go vegetarian when they can't afford to choose what to eat, but that's not the goal anyway. The goal is mainly to raise the discussion and make people more aware on the subject, let them know that it's not more expensive to be vegetarian, for instance, and of course, denounce animal abuse, and show how it relates with human exploitation. And of course, even poor people (those who aren't starving) can benefit from vegetarianism, and we have many examples of that in the hardcore scene in Brazil.

MRR: What does your utopia look like and how can we all help turning it into reality?

Some people cringe on the word Utopia, because they understand it as some kind of unattainable ideal society, imagined only through purely idealistic thoughts. I'm not one of them. I understand this word as the idea of some kind of society for the future, which doesn't mean I'm not in touch with reality or that it's an impossible dream. As the late Italian revolutionary Amadeo Bordiga said, "revolutionaries are explorers of the future," and it's up to revolutionaries to understand today's reality and the current world properly, in order to find out the best ways to go.

But despite all pragmatism, we should always keep in mind what we want and never forget that our program should be the path towards the future, and if you will, towards the realization of utopia. Bordiga also said that utopia is not prediction, but perspective of the future. And therefore, we don't need to idealize, to invent, but to, through the interpretation of the present, develop a perspective of how a future world of freedom would be like.

With that in mind, I understand that a free world (utopia) would necessarily be a world without money, wages, states and classes, because these are the categories that retain us from controlling our own lives and being the masters of our destinies, both collectively and individually. About the way to get there, I think the first step is everybody finding our that there is no hope under capitalism, no matter how much people push us the idea that it can be reformed and resolve it's own contradictions. If people realized that (and that could be intellectually or intuitively, through theory and practice), and realized that it's the very nature of this system that's responsible for their poverty, their boredom, their decontrol over their own lives, their decontrol over the society they live in, the huge differences between them and other people, wars, all kind of massacres, dictatorships, fake democracy, corruption and all that, they could crush capitalism in no time.

But for that to happen, we would have to break away from the material and ideological traps of capitalism, and create our own, independent (from capital and institutional politics) organs of struggle. Exploited workers and oppressed people of all kinds must, first and foremost, organize their own struggle, independently from the state and from political institutions within the capitalist machine.

I don't want to sound arrogant, like I have all the answers, so I'll stop here. Even in the band, we have different approaches on our anti-capitalism. But the point we all agree is: there's no hope under capitalism, and therefore, we must find out ways to overcome it, instead of looking for ways to reform it or "improve it." The system is something we must destroy, not something we must improve, because it's nature is in itself, something that's necessarily made to privilege a minority, and think only in terms of reforming it would only mean better, more modern ways to keep exploitation going.

SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS

MRR (Sid): So, you decided to call your album *Swedish Hardcore Must Die.* Isn't Swedish Hardcore what you're all about? Getting bored with it, are we?

SME: The hardcore scene is killing itself without our help. Some people's only goal seems to be to fit in. You, of all people, should know that conformity is boring. Or, has being dead dulled your senses?

MRR (Sid): Yeah, yea,h but your songs sound like any other Swedish "Dis"-clone, so I was wondering what makes you so special.

SME: We like both Discharge *and* Anti-Cimex!

MRR (OlofPalme): Who are they?

MRR (Sid): Untalented bands that destroyed punk in the early eighties. Don't worry about it and don't open your mouth again, you politician bastard you. I'll smack your mouth!

MRR (Olof Palme): I just don't understand why you want to interview these musically challenged middle-class ingrates to begin with.

MRR (Sid): It's not easy being part of the scene when you're dead. I take what I can get, even if it means promoting generic Swedish thrash that doesn't deserve it.

SME: We think we deserve all the attention that we can possibly get. We are a good hardcore punk band and even if hardcore punk bands are as common as the common cold, we feel we have something to contribute and we won't roll over for anyone, you fucking sell-out.

MRR (Sid): I died before the others sold out, thank you very much. What's your favorite record of all time?

SME: *Disgrace to the Corpse of Sid,* by Sore Throat.

MRR (Sid): Very funny. You sometimes sing in English and sometimes in Swedish—why the schizophrenia?

MRR (MdS): You should sing in French! I'll beat you with a pointed stick and make you beg for more!

SME: We write crappy lyrics in English to score punk-points, but every time we feel the need to communicate something important, we sing in Swedish. That way we can't be accused of being part of a reclusive intellectual elite, promoting the idea of a vanguard political party paving the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Which is of course exactly what we are.

MRR (Olof Palme): I can relate to that. People are stupid and you've got to address them in a language they understand. It's the first lesson of politics.

SME: Not much has changed in that department, but you seem like an angel compared to the bastards we have to deal with today. Some aspects of Swedish society actually resembled socialism in the 70s, but now it's all about selling out public property and lining the pockets of the rich. You should be glad you got out in time. And what could be a more punk rock exit than being shot in the street because of your politics.

MRR (Olof Palme): Who cares? I was the prime minister, not a punk rocker.

MRR (Sid): Which, of course, means that you got what you deserved.

MRR (MdS): You should've been beaten on the behind with a pointed stick!

MRR (Sid): So, I hear that 2003 will be a pretty active year for the Sunday Morning Einsteins?

SME: Yeah, we have an EP on Prank called *Det ar Synd om Dom Rika,* which means "pity the rich" in your tongue. We also have an album on Sin Fronteras called *Swedish Hardcore Must Die,* but

Interview with Sunday Morning Einsteins conducted 01-21-03, through a medium, by the ghost of Sid Vicious. Also present was the ghost of former Swedish prime minister, Olof Palme, and the restless spirit of Marquis De Sade, who kept interrupting. Sunday Morning Einsteins is a band from Stockholm, Sweden. They play what is considered noise by their parents (and most of their friends) and they recently saw fit to unleash a couple of records on the unsuspecting consumer-drones that comprise the punk scene of today. Who would have thought that the end of popular culture as we know it would look like this?

we already talked about that. There will definitely be some touring, plenty of bad language, and missed opportunities for a real life in 2003.

MRR (Sid): How seriously do you take this band? Is everything a joke to you?

SME: We take Germans seriously, because they are always serious. We also believe everything CRASS ever said because they're too silly not to be for real. When it comes to the band, some of us take it very seriously even though they pretend not to, but that's to be expected by people whose only interests are comic books, Star Trek, and poppers.

MRR (Sid): So, what's freedom to you?

SME: Being allowed to behave like an asshole and getting away with it.

MRR (Olof Pahne): What about solidarity and socialism?

SME: Solidarity is abstaining from being an asshole, even if it's allowed, and socialism is when you confuse freedom with capitalism and make solidarity into a law.

MRR (Sid): How very deep. Somebody obviously went to school and can't wait to tell us about it. What are you saying here? That capitalism is better than socialism?

SME: Capitalism is better when you're rich, and socialism is better when you're poor. You decide what side of the fence you want to be on.

MRR (MdS): And if you end up on the wrong side, I'll beat you with a pointed stick!

MRR (Sid): Would you shut up about that pointed stick, already! This is my interview, and I want to know when these losers plan on joining The System.

SME: We *are* The System! To think that you can stand outside of society and not be affected is one sad illusion. Were all prostitutes, and we all have our little roles to play in the anthill. Our role is to be a warning example for kids. Look what can happen if you don't eat your broccoli, do your chores and obey your mom.

MRR (Olof Palme): You're not saying that this is your only role, are you?

SME: Of course not! We also remind the general public to be kind to animals as often as we possibly can.

MRR (Sid): Why the name "Sunday Morning Einsteins"? It's kind of long and hard to remember, don't you think?

SME: Well, all the "Dis" names were taken, and "Sunday Morning Discharge" is just a vile name that makes even atheists wonder if nothing is sacred anymore. If you want to call us "The Communist Meat Machine" or "Arse Employer" or whatever, that's OK. Any name is fine, as long as it's spoken in awe or fear.

MRR (MdS): The Pointed Sticks!?

SME: Nah, that's been taken. From now on, we'll be called "The Scud Missiles Named George" and our next record will be called *Target: Junior.*

MRR (Sid): I'm running low on ectoplasma, so if you got anything else to say, do it now.

SME: We'llbe out there in 2003; the ruins of tomorrow: today!

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SWEDISH HARDCORE MUST DIE!

Interview by Austin

WHAT THE KIDS WANT

MRR: So y'all are called What the Kids Want collectively. Why don't you go ahead and tell me your individual names and instruments.

Ali: My name is Ali. I play guitar and sing and write the songs.

Jrd: I play drums. I'm Jrd.

Christopher: I'm Christopher. I play bass.

MRR: So, how many instruments do each of you play, and on which one do you feel the most comfortable?

Ali: Let's see. Let me count it off. I started off with piano, but I was kind of forced to do that as a kid, so I'm not really into it anymore, but I can kind of play. Then I played guitar, which I feel fairly confident at. I've played bass in several bands, but I'm probably not the best bass player in the world. And, I used to play drums in Sarah Tonin, along with Laguna.

MRR: Sometimes in the Hussies you played drums too, right?

Ali: Oh yeah, a little bit.

Jrd: I play it all, man. I'm an all around rocker.

Christopher: I play bass, mostly. I actually played guitar in a band, but it was pretty bad. And I used to play piano, which I was definitely forced to do. I played saxophone for a little while (everyone laughs), but I wasn't very good at that.

Ali: Were you in the school band?

Christopher: Oh yeah, I was, actually. It was cool.

Ali: What songs did you play?

Christopher: I think we played the James Bond theme. It was in grade school and my friend Matt, he was really funny, he like went up when we were playing, he was laughing really hard directly at us. He was totally rude like that but really cool. He got in a lot of trouble.

Jrd: How can you not laugh at a school band!

MRR: Okay, next question. It's obvious that Jrd and Ali have been playing and writing songs together for quite some time. How do you feel that the dynamic has changed over the years as you've played with different musicians?

Jrd: We've gotten sloppier.

Ali: Well, originally, me and Jrd started off, the first time we played together was with the Gay Planets, back in '99, and we just realized that we could, somehow, get together and, in the span of maybe fifteen minutes, write like ten songs. But, unfortunately that's never carried over to any other band other than the Gay Planets.

Jrd: They were some damn good songs.

Ali: Yeah! But, we try our best with other bands. I don't know. I think that we're both a little bit better musicians than we were maybe like four years ago.

Jrd: Or we can at least pretend we are.

MRR: You just got back from a month on the road. Share with us the ups and downs as well as the overall responses.

Jrd: The downs are always worrying the van's going to explode. I don't know, I guess the only part that really makes me nervous is driving.

Ali: I think the ups and downs were all in the mountains headed toward Wilkes Barre in a snowstorm.

Jrd: The ups are all the silly kids. I had a good time in Cleveland, Mississippi. It's probably the most intense, crazy place ever. Lexie (from One Reason) puked the entire time we were play ing.

Ali: I just want that to be printed in *MRR!*

Jrd: The entire duration of our set was Lexie puking. It was great.

Ali: Flint, Michigan was a really good show. It was a really weird scene.

Jrd: It was playing to like a hundred kids that weren't really punk kids, but they were really fun.

Ali: They were way into magic marker on their faces. That's what the kids want, magic marker.

MRR: Did you guys get generally really good responses everywhere you played?

Ali: No! (everyone laughs) There were maybe a few shows where everyone was dancing and having a good time, but I mean, it was our first tour. I've always felt like, at least with the Sissies, every tour we would go on, more people would be excited, more people would know our songs and dance around and stuff.

Jrd: There would always be those times when we would play a show, and afterwards everyone would be like, "that was great, that was awesome," and then we wouldn't sell anything. And then we'd play a really terrible show where we break strings and mess up songs, and then we'd sell tons of records. It just doesn't make sense. Maybe when we're bad, we're really good!

MRR: Do you feel like you saw many people that you used to see at Sissies shows?

Jrd: Sort of.

Ali: I don't think we played a lot of the same places really, just cause it's been like two and a half years since the Sissies toured

the East Coast, and it just switches so fast what towns are good and where people we know still live. I feel like maybe a few of the same people were setting up the shows, but I didn't see really that many of the same people.

MRR: You didn't feel like the Sissies had star drawing power?

Ali: Well, this one girl in Richmond, we played at a house and like everyone was really into drinking, which was cool, but she was sitting on the porch while we played. Then like later on in the night she came in and she was like, "Oh my god, you guys were in the Sissies? I really liked your one song '87,' I used to listen to it all the time when I was in high school!" And then I was like, "Oh, that's cool, did you catch our set?" And she was like, "No, I'm really just into sitting on the porch and drinking." So I was like, "That's cool, we have records," and she was like, "Oh, yeah, I don't really have any money!" But that was totally fine, I don't mean to sound like she was stupid or something, it was just funny!

Jrd: One of my favorite things is, I know I've heard this at least four different times from different people, like it'll be some burly guy and he'll be like, "You were in the Sissies, right?" And I'll be like, "Yeah," and he'll be like, "My girlfriend loves you guys!"

MRR: All of you were transplants to Bloomington, Indiana. How do you feel this town has affected you personally, politically, and musically?

Christopher: I don't know, I'm from San Francisco, it's pretty different. It's pretty laid back here. It's the first place where I haven't gone to school and haven't lived with my parents.

Jrd: And you don't get grounded for drinking at night!

Christopher: Right. So I mean, I think no matter where I lived it would be pretty different. It's a good place.

Jrd: I used to be a super fun, happy dude, now I'm this jaded punk dude!

Ali: It was Independence Fest (a month long Bloomington punk fest in summer 2001) that did it, after that it went downhill! Before Independence Fest I went to every single show in town, but, that just ruined it for me!

Jrd: It's ups and downs in Bloomington.

Ali: We'll give you a second to think of a witty comment.

Jrd: Bloomington's extreme, man! It's like extreme highs and lows and then this amazing middle of relaxation and quarry swimming.

Ali: I think the reason that I somehow can't ever move away from here, is because of this overwhelming feeling that anything is possible here, like it really is. Whatever you want to do, I mean, not anything; within reason. But if you have a dream that you really want to make happen, you can do it here. You know, like, somehow I started a bookstore here! If I lived in a huge city, or a much smaller town, like in a huge city it wouldn't have been possible at all because everything would've already existed, and I would've just been one person out of tons of people who would be trying to do the same thing. Here, I could just set out to do it and find a group of people who were also interested in doing it, and just set out and do it. And that's the one thing that I really like about it here. It's the same with bands, because in big cities there are so many bands, you just kind of get lost, and no one really cares about another band. But here, everyone kind of knows each other. I'm not saying that it's all one big scene, but to some extent everyone kind of works together and plays shows together. Although, we've read two bands' tour diaries within the past week that have said that they never will come back to Bloomington!

MRR: What bands?

Ali: Pirx the Pilot, and The Lazer.

Jrd: The Lazer, why not!?

MRR: Yeah, why won't The Lazer come back here?

Christopher: They were like, "In Bloomington, our underage roadie got arrested, we totally trashed Bobb and Cathy's house, thanks guys. Don't ever go to Bloomington."

Jrd: What!!

MRR: That's f'ed up dude. I totally threw them on that bill at the last minute and let them play!

Jrd: But Jamie's so nice! I don't think they meant it.

MRR: Dude, but did you know that Jamie got jam all across this room at one point? I started calling him "Jam"ie every time I saw him because he got jam like all the way in the kitchen, he made himself some jelly toast and he got jam on the counter, on the fuckin' stove, on the refrigerator door handle, and then in here he had it on the carpet, on the blankets that were on the couch, and like all over the couch itself, on the remote control..

Ali: And he was just trying to make a sandwich or something?

MRR: He was just making a sandwich! That's what I'm saying, dude, that kid does not know how to not make a mess.

Jrd: Exactly. He lived at my house for like two months!

Ali: It's just kinda sad that all the bands say that. I mean I know that Bloomington used to have really awesome shows all the time, I mean to an extent, sort of, and now we have really awesome shows sometimes but we also have bad shows a lot, but I think people should just give us a chance! We try hard, you know?

Jrd: It's like, there's not a lot of kids, and all the kids that are here are pretty poor, so it's like, unless you want to get a bunch of drunk college kids to your shows, you're not really gonna get a huge turnout.

MRR: I think the problem is that Bloomington had so much hype, you know what I mean, whether it's like the indie rock scene or the pop punk scene here. Everyone just thinks it's like a mecca. I mean, granted, it's easy to live and eat for free constantly, but the punk scene here is actually pretty fucking bitter.

Ali: Yeah, I guess people just have really high hopes for Bloomington, and it doesn't always come true.

MRR: Okay, should we move on? Best show or band that you've seen in the past year.

Jrd: The Carrie Nations at the Bottom of the Hill.

MRR: Yeah, that was a great show!

Christopher: The Carrie Nations in Athens. It was off the hook!

Ali: Um, for the past year I've been working like nonstop, so I didn't get to go to that many shows, but I guess when Bitchin' played at the A Hole last summer. That was a really good show.

MRR: Okay, what's the most inspirational individual or band in history for you?

Jrd: Hickey. Matty Luv. Changed my life.

Ali: I know I always answer the same thing for this question, but I mean it's really true for me that my mom has really been the most inspirational person, in terms of music, among other things, because she's my mom! You know, when I was a kid she was always playing in bands, and I grew up seeing her bands play, and learning not only that women could play in bands, but that anyone could. They played more bars than we do, but also the same kind of shows that we play a lot. But I think that that's a lot of why I play in bands, and probably will for the rest of my life.

MRR: I think "Dear Lou" is an incredible song, by the way.

Ali: Yeah everyone, when they hear our record, they're like, I really like "Dear Lou," and it was the same when the Sissies covered "Breathin'," and everyone was like, "Yeah, that's your best song!" And both of them were covers of my mom's band!

Jrd: Maybe you'll have kids one day and they'll cover your songs!

Christopher: I think that I constantly get inspired with different people and different things. I had a lot of friends back home who were just really cool 'cause of their energy, and they were really fun to be around. I think recently, after going on tour, it was really cool playing really good shows and meeting all the nice people who set up the shows. I haven't really been excited about that for a year or so. And I came back here and I was like man, I gotta have badass shows and get a cool space, and get tons of high school kids to come out and have fun. It probably won't happen, but I don't know, I was really stoked about it.

MRR: What's your favorite spot in your hometown?

Christopher: It's not there anymore, but the Cliff House (in San Francisco), they had a really cool old arcade and a museum.

MRR: The Cliff House is gone?

Christopher: Yeah, there are a bunch of restaurants there now. They relocated all the arcade games to one of the piers.

Jrd: Can I tell you my favorite place in town? Putt Putt Golf and Games!!

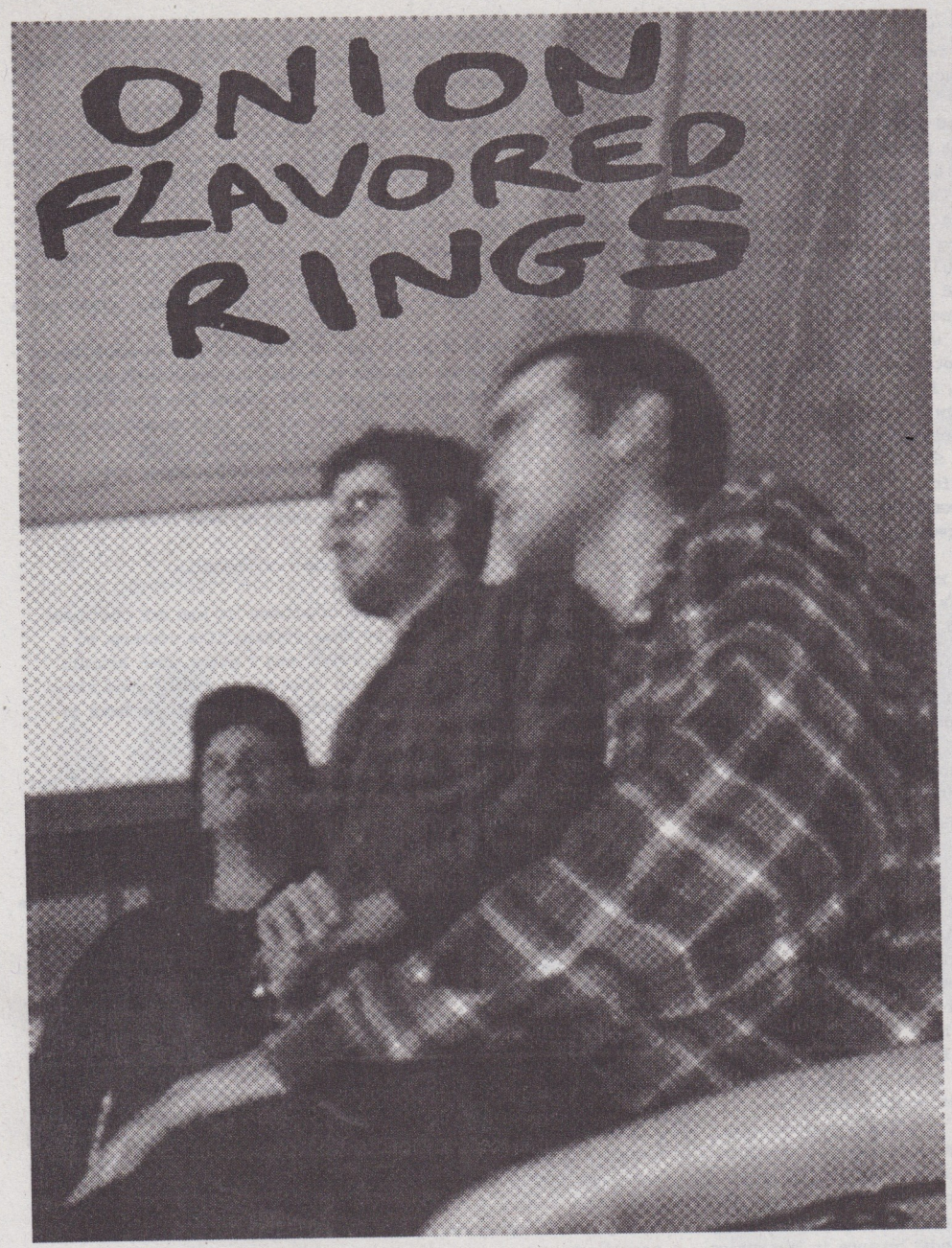
MRR: Here in Bloomington? I meant your hometown.

Jrd: This is my hometown. I actually can't remember where else I've lived.

MRR: I mean the town you grew up in.

Jrd: I think there's a strip mall through the town I grew up in.

You can order the What the Kids Want 7" record, *Inside Jokes Explained*, or the CDR version of the same songs, by sending $3 to PO Box 954, Bloomington, IN 47402. You can contact What the Kids Want by writing to that address, or by emailing whatthekidswant@excite.com.



The Onion Flavored Rings live in San Francisco. They are Steve Funyon (guitar and vocals), Paul Curran (bass), and Iggy Scam (drums). Mission Records was a sweltering cesspool after their show with Sexy, Tommy Lasorda, Best Friends, and the Fleshies. We escaped to the backyard to talk about various things, onion-flavored and otherwise. Ivy, an old friend and bandmate of Steve and Iggy's, joined us for a while. OFR's first, and new LP/CD is called *Used to It*.
Interview by Arwen

MRR: Hey, Onion Flavored Rings.
Iggy: Here we are on the cover of *Maximum Rocknroll*.
MRR: It's an exciting place to be.
Ivy: Tell me the story behind the O.
MRR: And the F and the R.
Paul: We're not gonna go to the N and the I and the other O...?
MRR: Come now. Three letters is enough.
Steve: They used to be different letters, but we changed them to protect our identities.
MRR: I see.
Iggy: We're Onion Flavored Rings because Ye Olde Buttfuck was already taken.
MRR: No, but for real—is there some special relationship with packaged onion-flavored products?
Steve: I was in a band a long time ago called the Funyons. This is sort of like the sequel to the Funyons.
MRR: Tell me about the Funyons. You were in Miami, right?
Steve: I was in the Funyons for several years. It started out being...
Iggy: It started out being fun.
Steve: ...a kind of weird folk band.
MRR: When?
Steve: Many years ago. I was much younger. More than ten. It was me and Mario and the Methadone Actors, and Betty from the Human Oddities. We just played my songs on the street and the sidewalk everywhere. We did that for a while, and Betty quit and Mario sort of faded away, but by this point, Sir Robert from Kreamy 'Lectric Santa was playing percussion. But he didn't have a proper drum set, he just had garbage, basically—like scrap metal, and boxes, and bottles, and any weird stuff that we found. I remember we had the E from the Zayre's sign. Remember that?
Ivy: Oh yeah. How could I forget?
MRR: What is Zayre's?
Steve: It was a department store that went out of business.
Ivy: Like Kmart.
MRR: So when you talk about playing on the street, what kind of street? Like a downtown city street?
Steve: Yeah. All kinds of streets.
MRR: For money, or love, or what?
Steve: I don't think you could say for money or love. Maybe for hate. People really hated us. We played a lot in South Beach amidst the whole club scene. Some people would really like us, but most people would really hate us. It was kind of fun. People yelling and screaming.
Iggy: South Beach is sort of a pedestrian-friendly part of Miami. With people walking around.
Steve: And pretty wide sidewalks generally. It was hard to find a place that would let us play. I had a little battery-powered amplifier, and Robert was playing percussion.
MRR: Was your amp walkie-talkie sized, or car battery sized?
Steve: Car battery sized. I rigged it to run on batteries.
Ivy: Any troubles with the law? Did you ever get arrested?
Steve: No. We got close to being arrested. The cops did hassle us quite a bit, actually. I don't know if it's officially illegal to play music on the street, but we got told not to play a lot. We got told things like, "Even if I arrest you and we don't detain you, you'll never see your equipment again." Things like that. You know, it's funny, because one of the things I got good at, playing on the streets, was preceding to the end of a song no matter what distracting thing was going on around me.
MRR: And hopefully this principle will extend to interviews.
Steve: I remember playing while some big jock was screaming in my face

"You suck! Go home!" over and over again. You know, you have to finish the song.

MRR: I want to rewind to where you say, "your songs." Is it true that you write the songs for OFR?

Steve: Is that true?

Iggy: It's true.

Paul: It's true; I've seen them written.

MRR: And the others play them?

Steve: Yes, I tell Paul and Iggy what to play and then it's finished... No, we work out arrangements.

Iggy: Steve gives us bus money, and stuff like that. He's actually really cool to us. He treats us really good.

Paul: Yeah, like he gives us candy bars, and all that kind of stuff. But it kind of sucks when he drives us around and we have to sell the records door to door.

Steve: *We're not going home till we sell all these records!* I'm trying to shed my image of the elderly weird punk rocker, and this isn't helping.

Paul: Well I'm interested in this too, actually. In the Funyons days, did you write songs and then you guys came up with arrangements for them?

Steve: We did, but it just sort of evolved, and a lot of times it was just Robert. It was a lot easier to be in the Funyons because I could just practice by myself and Robert would improvise percussion. So I guess we were arranging, that way. But it wasn't like I thought, it would be really great if Robert could hit the stop sign, at this time, or get up and hit the storefront window. We had sort of routines that we did.

Ivy: Definitely. A lot of garbage. They were great.

Iggy: We saw Steve a lot, and we played with Steve a lot.

Steve: Iggy and Ivy played with me instead of Robert, or in addition to Robert...

Iggy: I would like to say that this is gonna piss Robert off if he still reads *MRR*. There was a nebulous time when there was no official drummer of the Funyons. Many people played.

Steve: Because Robert was in Kreamy 'Lectric Santa, so he was occasionally unavailable. And I wasn't in another band, because I don't have side projects, unlike some people that are in bands.

Iggy: Robert would get the glamorous nighttime South Beach gigs, and me and Steve would go downtown in 95 degree weather and get yelled at and chased around by cops.

Steve: We were just leaving, officer. There's the big Metromover/Metrorail debate. Robert and I did play on Metrorail.

MRR: Metrorail being like the El, like BART?

Ivy: Yes.

Steve: Except it doesn't really go anywhere. It's Miami's huge, failed mass transit system.

Ivy: It's like an extended Disneyworld kind of train.

Paul: This is explained in the insert to our album.

Ivy: I wanted to mention the awesome show when me and Iggy lived on a boat. We had the Funyons come play on the boat. We rowed 40 people out to the show, and five people sank.

MRR: How many people in each dinghy?

Ivy: Five. We had two rowboats.

MRR: So you had to make four different trips.

Iggy: It was a long night.

MRR: Let's move away from Miami for a moment.

Steve: That's what we all did.

MRR: Where did Paul come into the picture?

Paul: I came in later. I knew Iggy, because he's lived here in SF for quite a few years. We were in Seismic Apocalypse, briefly—a band whose basic purpose was to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Loma Prieta Earthquake. So we did that, and that was it. And then a few years later, Iggy asked if I wanted to play bass, and it was at a time when I was really, really jonesing to be in a band, because I hadn't been in a band for years. I said, Yeah! What is it? I didn't care.

Steve: Oh.

Paul: Well it turned out that it was great! I was stoked, but I really didn't care.

Steve: What you're saying is, even if we were awful you would have played with us, but we're not awful.

Paul: Yeah, that's right. It was an added bonus.

Steve: I believe that. It sounds very believable.

Iggy: Mission Records, at that time, was a bar.

MRR: It was a lot quieter, probably. And maybe not as hot.

Steve: I'd like our readers to also think of what they were doing ten years ago.

Iggy: Those were different times.

MRR: Ten years ago is a long time, for many of us.

Iggy: Many of the people at today's show were not even born then. Many of the kids drinking Sparks in the front room were not even alive.

Steve: It's true. That Sparks is kind of an alarming trend.

Iggy: Cointelpro.

Steve: I was nervous about it, seeing it in Gainesville. It's like wildfire.

MRR: Let's get down to some themes in the Onion Flavored Rings. I'd like to discuss, for example, physics. You have a song about quantum physics.

Iggy: We drive to Eureka and these guys just bicker about physics the whole way up.

MRR: This may be an amateur point of view, but let me just put it out there and you can respond to it. The basic laws of physics are well understood, and not many people are trying to improve on them?

Steve: Improve on them? *You have to raise the speed limit on light!*

Iggy: I thought that Brian Hamilton of the Fleshies was trying to improve on the laws of physics tonight.

MRR: But quantum physics, on the other hand, takes things to a slightly different realm. It sort of expands physics to the realm of the metaphysical, am I right?

Steve: I don't know. I mean, it's physics. It's physical.

MRR: It engages an element of mystery in the laws of physics.

Steve: That's true, but you know why—because we're just not ready to understand it. Human beings have not evolved to the point where the apparent paradoxes of physics are palatable and easily grasped. Maybe in a hundred years.

MRR: So quantum physics is only a glimpse into a future understanding. It's a sort of unformed acceptance that there is a realm that we don't understand?

Steve: I think maybe some people do, or at least they know what the rules are, or at least they're not baffled when these weird things happen at the subatomic level. But human beings are just not ready...it's only been a hundred years, you know? I bet the first guy who figured out how to make fire scared the shit out of everyone around him, and then eventually everyone's like, "oh, yeah, fire." Now I sound like a staunch defender of the laws of physics... I have a degree in physics. When you have a science degree, it's on your mind that you're going to go all the way: get a PhD, be a professor, do research. By the time I was a grad student, I just thought that, well, academia sucks. The politics is more important than the actual research.

MRR: Even in physics?

Steve: I think in every academic discipline, yeah.

MRR: Of course, Einstein was a physicist, and he certainly got involved in politics.

Steve: He was a total player. But I might have endured the politics of it, if I didn't also lose faith in the physics of it. I thought when I went to school that I was going to learn how everything in the universe worked.

MRR: Sure, of course.

Steve: That I wouldn't have to rely on religion, or whatever other things people have to tell themselves they understand the world. What I discovered was that metaphorically, you're at the center of something when you're born, and you have this journey toward the horizon where you're going to understand everything, and the horizon is just the same for every-

one. It's like this circle an infinite distance away, and if you get to it or not, it's the same circle—whether you believe in psychology or English literature, or physics, or chemistry...

MRR: It always seemed to me that physics is at least a fairly unambiguous way to try to understand the world.

Steve: That's not true, though. The difficulty is, it's ambiguous.

Iggy: Are you talking about an actual race to the circle, or are you talking about Achilles and the Tortoise?

Paul: Don't get me started on Achilles!

Steve: I just found that there ended up being a limit to where your understanding was, and beyond that, you just had to sort of believe that everything was going to keep working. And I didn't see how that was different from believing in Jesus.

MRR: To some degree, you resort to faith.

Steve: Exactly. So I asked one of my professors, is physics about what happens, or about why things happen? And he said that physics is about

what. If you want to know why, go to church.

Iggy: And that's how punk rock was born.

MRR: We always have to look for why, beyond that.

Steve: Do we?

MRR: Well, if we're interested in that sort of thing.

Steve: The most useful thing I learned studying physics is that it's possible to formulate a question that can't be answered.

MRR: I was arguing with a friend about that song. He said, "Obviously, that song is not really about physics."

Steve: Oh.

MRR: And I said, "Really, it isn't?" Comments?

Steve: What's it about?

Paul: Is there a hidden meaning?

MRR: Is there an *other* meaning?

Steve: Uhh...

Paul: I know the answer. I don't know why it's taking you so long.

Steve: I don't think it's about anything else. I think my songwriting is pretty literal.

MRR: So if the metaphor exists, it wasn't because you made it up.

Steve: Not consciously. Because I think my attitude toward physics is my attitude toward other things.

Iggy: And it is possible to write a song that can't be answered.

MRR: Well, the thing I would think it would be applicable to would be, you know...

Iggy: Doing it.

MRR: Love!

Steve: I don't know. I don't think I ever wrote a love song where I was the one who said, aw, forget it. It's usually a reaction to the opposite.

Paul: Equal but opposite.

Steve: Yeah, exactly.

MRR: But I would say three quarters of the OFR songs I've heard have been love songs of one kind or another.

Steve: I suppose. You could say that I had a love affair with physics.

Iggy: Steve loves a dead body covered in tape.

MRR: Hm.

Iggy: A mummy.

MRR: Ah, yes—a dead body covered in tape. Can you tell me about the mummy song?

Steve: I was in a band called the Feebles that did a lot of songs about Big Foot and the Loch Ness Monster, and natural disasters like the Titanic sinking, and Jaws, etc., and so I wanted to fit in, because Jimmy Da Brain wrote all those songs. So I wrote "Mummy" because I liked the melody, and it was just this made-up version of the mummy myth. It made sense to me, but I don't know if it's like the official story of mummies.

Paul: No Egyptologists have threatened to beat us up yet.

Steve: It's probably not far off, though.

MRR: It's a good thing, because you might not win such a battle, really.

Steve: The thing about the mummy, though? That song *is* metaphorical. It's not about mummies, per se—it's about people who don't take seriously the risks, like the curse of the mummy—people that scoff at superstition, and they're actually wrong. They die, right, in the song. And they never know why.

Iggy: Let me just say that Steve wrote this song on September 10, 2001.

MRR: Ho-ly shit.

Steve: There's a line in the song: "they always think they're too smart to be afraid." I think maybe sometimes you should be afraid, no matter how smart you are. I guess that's the idea.

MRR: I have a question from Jimmy, now.

Iggy: Uh oh.

Steve: It's not the masturbating one, is it?

Iggy: Jimmy the Punk, or Jim Broustis?

MRR: Jim Broustis.

Iggy: Good.

MRR: Jim the Punk gave us that one about masturbating, but we're going to skip that one.

Steve: What is the most interesting place you ever...

Iggy: I feel like Jim wanted us to answer it for *him*, and then he was all right. Once we told him where we'd masturbated, he was like, "oh."

Steve: See, I didn't know if that question was metaphorical, or...

Iggy: It was definitely physical.

MRR: OK, so this is Jimmy Broustis's question. Don't you think it's time that someone stands up and talks to the kids about doing something productive with their lives instead of joining a band?

Steve: I don't know. It depends on what you want to do in your life. Do you want to be productive?

Paul: Who's to say being in a band isn't productive?

Iggy. Hmm.

Paul: Creativity, you know. Art.

MRR: Well we only have a certain amount of years.

Steve: What?

MRR: A certain amount of years, to do things. A certain amount of time.

Paul: We're pushing that envelope. We're a hundred years old.

Steve: Our combined age is one hundred. Or, I mean, uh, seventy. Seventy.

Paul: You shouldn't tell the kids what to do.

Steve: They don't listen anyway.

Paul: What if somebody told Steve to do something productive instead of joining a band? Then he'd be some physics professor right now, doing no good to nobody.

Steve: The things I enjoy doing in my life have always been non-productive—like learning physics and not actually being a teacher. I learned how to juggle—that's totally useless. I like knowing a lot of useless things.

Iggy: Well, this is a direct answer to Jimmy Broustis. You have to teach by example. I feel like in this space completely controlled by punk rockers, out of the control of the Man, learning how to be together and have a space together and how to entertain each other and run everything together—I think that's entirely productive, and it creates a viable alternative that people can find themselves within. I feel that's productive enough, and that's the thing that's more lasting than whether you sing specifically about taking part in the street war, or about physics. The example of what is happening is so clearly awesome and even more poignant based on the fact that this place is gonna close.

MRR: This leads to another question, which is, you know, we're sitting here in the backyard of Mission Records, and it's full of bikes, and some incredibly, surprisingly healthy trees...

Iggy: That's because Jimmy takes care of them.

MRR: Jimmy takes care of them and loves them, and inside we have this space that many of us have hung out in for years, and used as a home base and a place to see shows. What are we going to do when it's gone?

Iggy: The same thing we do when every other place is gone—we get another space and keep going.

MRR: But then the "we" changes, too.

Iggy: True. But anybody who wants to help will help. The opportunities are there. I don't know, I'll be really sad to see this place go, but I don't think it's going to be the end of our punk rock scene. We're going to miss it a lot. People don't realize that yet. But people are already working on the next level.

MRR: Tell me a little bit about the tour you did this past winter with Bitchin' and Allergic to Bullshit.

Paul: Oh, man, it was great. We all met up in Gainesville. We all got out there our separate ways, and we met up with our friends in Bitchin'. We played with them when they were out here in California, and they're a great band and good friends. We played some shows with them in Florida and New Orleans, and it was frickin' cold. It was like the coldest winter the South has had in a long time. Pipes were breaking, and it was kind of hellish, but you gotta have that kind of trial and tribulation if you're going to have a memorable tour, I think.

Steve: I'll never forget waking up and seeing my own breath, even though I was inside.

Iggy: Inside and outside were the same thing.

Steve: We played in a basement, too. I don't know how I even got to move my fingers to play. That was in Greensboro, I think.

Iggy: Yeah, Greensboro. There was snow everywhere. We were loading our shit into this basement and everyone was shivering. We thought that was going to be the ultimate of no-shows—we were basically playing at like two in the morning, in the snow. But all these people rocked out like hell, and bought the record, and were coming up to us like, "thank you for coming to Greensboro! It means so much to us when bands come here!" It *felt* like productivity, you know. People were feeling it pretty hard.

Paul: A lot of the shows were like that—they were really small, but somehow we sold lots of records and people gave us lots of money and it was amazing.

Steve: We always had money for gas.

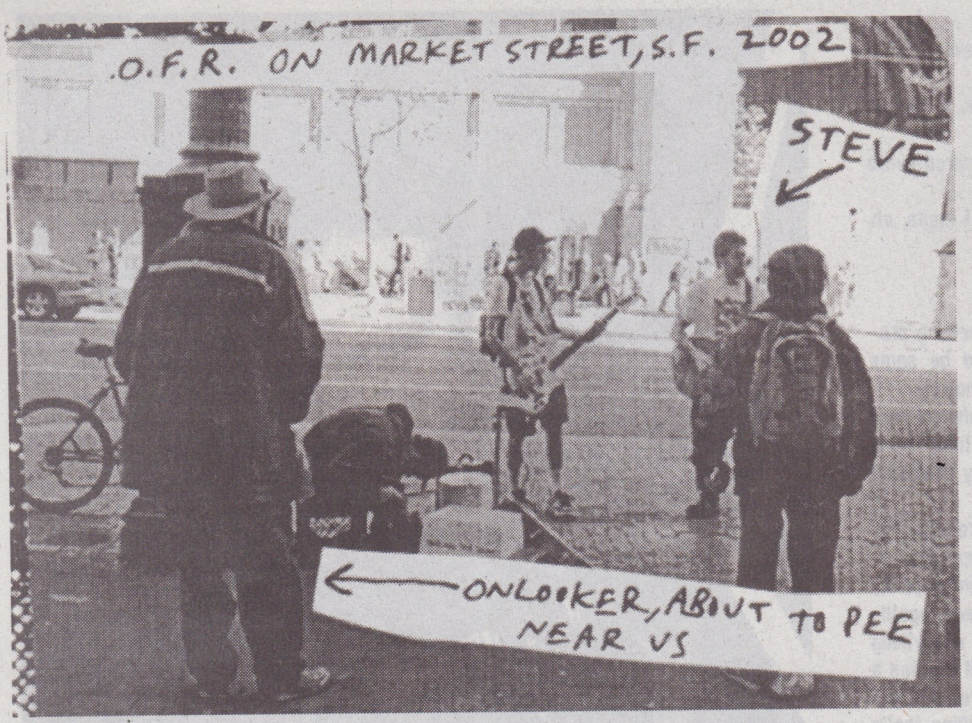
Iggy: Some were pretty big and everything got moshed into us while we were playing. It was a pretty responsive tour. It was awesome. It was the ultimate, for people dancing at shows.

MRR: There's an affectionate level of connection between San Francisco, and the Bay Area in general, and the South—specifically Florida and certain other cities, like Chattanooga, etc. The reason this evolved, it seems to me, is because of individuals who have moved around, kept strong connections, and done a lot of creative projects. Do you feel like such a thing could extend and become stronger around the country?

Iggy: I do. I feel like it is. I'm booking a tour for another band I'm in right now, Allergic to Bullshit, and it's been the easiest tour to book ever. People everywhere are into the kind of stuff that everybody's doing in San Francisco or Chattanooga, like the same kinds of music. The crew seems really large right now. Everybody's really excited about the rock.

MRR: Is there a political element that could also be spread along the same lines?

Iggy: I thought about this situation today. I walked down to Mission Records today and I saw sixty people that are all under 18 that I've never met before. I was thinking about it—this is the entry level for ideas of community and political change. A lot of people who become activists and are excited about that stuff—it came to them when they were young, from punk rock. You demonstrate to people how things work in the underground, and maybe it goes somewhere, maybe it doesn't—not everybody sticks around. As a band we don't play bars and over-21 clubs and shitty shows. We try to keep everything really DIY and stuff, but I don't feel like we're political in nature or anything, you know. And I feel that's fine. I'd be upset about being held to that kind of lyrical standard, when things in practice are that way. Of those sixty kids, I'm sure that some of them are going to fight the



cause at some later date.

MRR: Or at least go into physics.

Steve: Or leave it.

MRR: Let's talk about actually producing the LP. How sometimes DIY can trip over the "it" or the "yourself." Or even the "do"! Just how you put it together, I mean.

Paul: We were lucky enough to have money to pay for the recording, and the pressing, and things that our record label was supposed to do. Um.

Steve: Unnamed record label. Yeah, we just went down to San Jose and did it in Joe's garage. What I like about the record, and what I like about the band too, it that all our strengths come together. Like, I'm not good at packing the van, but Paul is. I feel like I had a big part in the songs, but the packaging is informed a lot by Iggy and Paul's zine background. I think the insert is a really nice zine. We each defer to the others' strengths. I don't try to make the set list, because Iggy is the set list guy.

Iggy: I can't imagine writing a song and asking Steve to sing it. Steve's the songwriter.

MRR: But you guys are all fairly venerable in our little world, right? I mean, not any older than me. Well, actually, I think all three of you are a little older than me.

Iggy: How old are you, 28?

Steve: Yeah, we're slightly older than that.

MRR: But here's the thing. It's not just that you're older, but when you get older, don't you specialize a little bit more? So that you don't depend on each other for everything all the time, as a band? You have your own lives; you do your own things. You've identified the things that you share so that you can make the most out of them, instead of wringing each other dry?

Paul: True. Interesting observation. I think you learn about yourself as you get older, and you know what you can do and what you can't do.

Iggy: We haven't attempted to live in a commune together.

MRR: And you won't, right? Which is the lesson of age!

Steve: It's funny, because when I was younger...it's like watching the Monkees when you're a kid—you think that's the way to be in a band. You all live together, you rock together, whatever. That's what I thought a band was like, but now that I'm older...I mean, I'm sorry, guys, but I never really thought about living with you.

MRR: All I'm saying is, you get older, and you learn to need different things from different people, in different measures.

Steve: I'm content with what I get from these guys.

Iggy: I'm in like five other bands, and I *have* lived with all of those people.

Steve: And I'm trying to deal with that.

Iggy: Most of those people I'm ready to live in a car with at a moment's notice. For like six years. If I have to.

MRR: Maybe that's an essential part of it, especially if you're going to get in a fucking van and go on tour.

Iggy: I'm not afraid.

MRR: Good. I have one more question. There is a kind of nihilist streak running through the songs.

Iggy: That's scientific.

Steve: It's doom, yeah.

Iggy: I would say, before Steve answers, that for some reason politics came up in this interview, and I would say that there is a political vs. scientific schism in our band—or in the world.

Steve: I'd like to address both the futility of politics and the futility of science. I think you won't go broke betting against the human race.

MRR: That's a very kind way to put it. I'm impressed with your tact. It's true that idea of science intersecting with politics—or punk—is one of the unusual things about your band.

Iggy: OK, but remember a time when punk was nihilistic?

MRR: That's not the contradiction, to me. The contradiction lies more with the physics.

Steve: It's true. You can't think of any, like, *Dr.* Sid Vicious: "As soon as I finish smashing this atom, I'm gonna shoot up!" It's probably that science convinced me that we're doomed.

MRR: I think you were probably ready for it. Any more questions?

Paul: There's lots of things I want to know.

Steve: It's true; we've never sat down and worked out our shit.

Iggy: Is this gonna break up the band?

Steve: We do talk about stuff a lot. Whenever we learn a new song, I print out the lyrics and distribute them to the band, to make sure I'm not saying anything too crazy or offensive, or at least that they see my point of view, though they may not agree with every word I ever wrote.

Iggy: I feel like that's important too. Maybe that comes with age. This is part of the forum of punk rock. I feel like every one of Steve's lyrics is true.

Paul: To somebody, somewhere.

Steve: And yet not true. It's the Eigen States, right? The combination of truth and falsehood.

MRR: Eigen States?

Steve: I believe "Eigen" is the German word for true. There are electrons spinning, and some are up and some are down, but if you just take a given electron, you don't know what it's doing. It might be doing some combination of the two. But how can it be a combination of up and down? See, we're not ready.

MRR: You keep going halfway to the wall, I guess.

Steve: Give us two hundred years.

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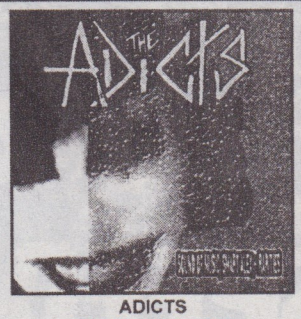

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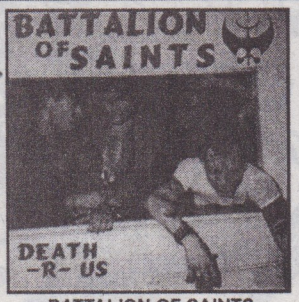

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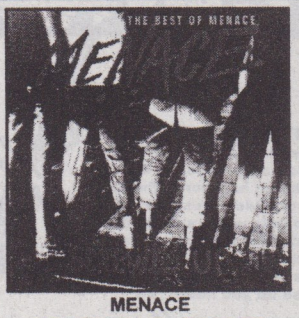

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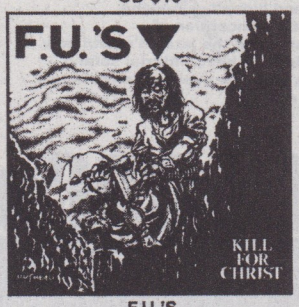

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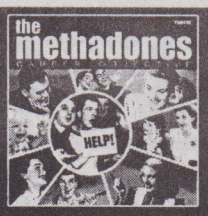

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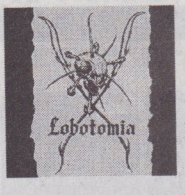

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BOOKS

It's All Lies: The Fusion of Resistance and Creativity in Israel
92 pages • $30.00
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Oakland, CA 94612

As the "Road Map" for peace becomes more bloodied by the day, now is the time for the world to become aware of alternative opinions held by the Israeli underground. *It's All Lies* provides a much-needed collection of flyers, leaflets, and excerpts from subversive magazines that span over 30 years of resistance from within Israel. This beautifully constructed DIY coffee table-sized book presents a segment in Hebrew on one page, and on the facing page offers an English translation. The editors recognize that not every quotation has an equally meaningful translation, as seen with the word "shalom," which means "hello," "goodbye," and "peace." A CD packed with various Israeli punk bands covering most punk/hardcore genres, a youthful movie based on hope, and a PDF containing the entire book and band information is pasted inside the front cover.

American media continually distorts Israeli politics, as if every Israeli citizen uncritically supports the Sharon agenda. A major Israeli peace demonstration of between 60,000 to 100,000 people this spring was barely covered in the news. Within these pages, a long history of resistance is revealed chronologically to improve the cross-cultural exchange of revolutionary ideas.

Starting in the early 1970s with more hippy-ish selections, *It's All Lies* compiles excerpts that still hold notable critiques of oppressive governments and misuse of political power to control and censor. Many of these flyers are more than just anti-government or anti-occupation. Many sections address how this oppressive government affects the entire area in many ways, including sexism, animal rights, human rights, classism, and the strain on ecology that comes with over-consumption.

Now is the time (if not before 1968!) to learn about opposition and resistance within the state of Israel in order to understand the biased information that is passed on as news. When the United States can discuss the importance of a Palestinian state in the same breath they list Arab countries "in need" of shock and awe regime changes, western citizens must stop and question motives in this region. Ariel Sharon speaks of peace by acknowledging that the West Bank and Gaza are "occupations," but then backs an attempted assassination of Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, well-known Hamas leader. His actions constantly demonstrate peace is not his objective. As opposing views are suppressed, the fundamentalists of Hamas and Islamic Jihad have grown stronger and the Palestinian Left has declined. This transition creates a more violent backlash.

The death toll since September 2000 is more than 800 Israelis and 2,300 Palestinians, and somehow "safety" is the word used to persist with road blocks, border controls, secret police surveillance, aerial patrols, and 300 miles of US-financed, Israeli-only bypass roads, as if this is the way to bolster peace. In the terminology section of *It's All Lies*, "Security" is defined as "Israel's sacred cow, a vague notion, which the authorities use in place of arguments." This definition seems to be spreading worldwide. The individuals that collected and translated these segments along with the original presentation should be commended.
—Tobia Jean

God Save My Queen: A Tribute
Daniel Nester
$13.00
Soft Skull Press

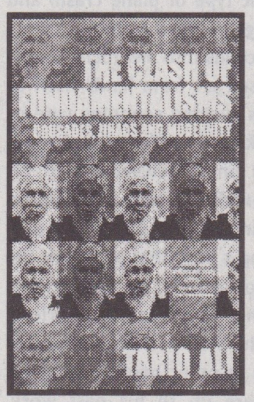
I found myself "not getting it" when I first tried reading this book, finally flinging it into a heap of dirty laundry across the room and muttering "what *is* this arty fart *crap*?" Fortunately, I had a month to do my review, and like a favorite song, it grew on me and revealed itself on many levels.

God Save My Queen just might be literary kin to Liz Phair's *Exile in Guyville*. While Phair responds to the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street* with songs about her ill-fated relationships, Nester runs through every Queen album (including the Flash Gordon soundtrack), song for song, in order, and through prosaic wordplay, diary-like snippets and creepy footnotes, honors them with unabashed gushing fandom, intimate thoughts, and in and too-in jokes.

Nester builds on adolescent themes such as alienation (imagine a chubby pubescent Queen fanatic growing up in the heart of Springsteen country, where your dad brandishes guns while you read James Joyce), burgeoning sexuality (Huffy riding heterosexuality awakened by massive doses of Freddie Mercury crotch maven homoeroticism), the transition of the role of music as bubblegum to that of deep personal savior (alongside fueling the obsessiveness of a nascent music nerd), and the peach of immortality and self-aggrandizement of youth (goose-stepped to the bombast of Queen as soundtrack to puberty).

"And their jackets on the inner sleeve not yet out of fashion, hair wrapped up in scarves. My town of beer cans and leaf piles."

This book is touching, highly literate, thought-provoking, and very funny, in every way as over the top as Queen ever was. Like the best songs, it grows on you with every read.
—Henry Yu



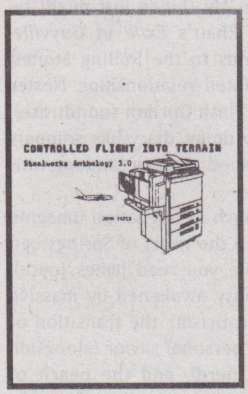
The Clash Of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity
Tariq Ali
Verso • 180 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014-4606
$15.00 • 428 pages
www.versobooks.com

In *The Clash Of Fundamentalisms*, Tariq Ali paints a vivid picture of world religions and the ways that "leaders" have manipulated them for their own personal gain. He mainly focuses on Islam, Zionism, and Christianity, but also manages to bring up other religions and the ways in which they are just as bad. Ali uses his historical outlook to bring the events of September 11th into perspective. He details how the United States played a crucial role in funding and training most of the "terrorist" leaders. He goes on to explain how the US population, overall, has a short attention span and tends to overlook these events. We've become more concerned with seeking revenge. Instead of asking

"Why did 'they' attack us?" we should be asking, "Why *haven't* they been attacking us?" and "What took them so long?"

September 11th was merely a footnote, if you think about it in a more historical and geographical perspective. While it was the largest attack on US soil, it doesn't really compare to atrocious murder in other parts of the world. Ali states, "To accept that the appalling deaths of over 3000 people in the USA are more morally abhorrent than the 20,000 lives destroyed by Putin when he razed Grozny or the daily casualties in Palestine and Iraq is obscene." When speaking of war in 100 years, will anyone speak of September 11th as the starting point? The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand is what some say started World War I, but you don't really hear too much about that. Time and history seems to give us the answers.

I found Tariq Ali's book to be well researched and humorous. I have a hard time reading so much about religion because I've never cared for it. Ali does a good job at slamming the door on every major religion with concise, well-founded arguments. I highly recommend this book to anyone with a sense of history, people who question religion, and anyone who needs a billion other reasons why we should never go to war.
—Greg Harvester



Controlled Flight Into Terrain
John Yates
$11.00 • 128 pages
AK Press • 674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1163

John Yates is best known for his ubiquitous shirt designs, like "Democracy: We Deliver" and "Officer Friendly," The bold, sparse designs of these and other pieces make his work instantly recognizable. *Controlled Flight Into Terrain* is Yates's third collection of images combined with political commentary. His art consists of a black and white image, usually from the mid-to-late 1900s, with one line of bold text above and one below the image. The text usually combines to form one or two dependent phrases that make a political point. As a disclaimer, I work for Alternative Tentacles, a record company that not only does business directly with Yates and the book's publisher, AK Press, but also sells this book and other Yates books and shirts direct to mail order customers.

Yates' well-written, witty introduction is the best part of this book. The introduction lays out the meaning of the title (a National Transportation Safety Board term for a specific type of plane crash) and snappy, well-thought-out critiques of the George W. Bush administration.

Unfortunately, the book quickly descends into mediocre images and didactic statements. Although Yates's chosen art form lends itself to unimaginative sloganeering, in the past he has avoided sounding trite or patronizing. This time around, though, his work comes off as radical swagger signifying very little of substance. Based on the cleverness of his "Democracy: We Deliver" image, it's clear that his chosen style can work on multiple levels and can simultaneously entertain and provide thought-provoking commentary. There are one or two images here that approach the cleverness of "Democracy: We Deliver"—unfortunately for the reader, there are more than a hundred other images that do not come even close.

I want to support Yates's art and the well-written message of subversion and thoughtfulness that he shows in other books and in his introduction, but this book does not measure up to his past work. Considering the well-phrased jabs in the introduction, I'm shocked at how feeble and mechanical the text surrounding his images reads. Not only that, but there are also images re-used from other Yates works and design jobs (the cover art of DOA's *Dawning of a New Error* CD, *Maximum Rocknroll*'s *They Don't Get Laid* compilation, and the image from his "Eye For An Eye" shirt are all included with different text). Shouldn't a new book contain fresh images? Even though the DOA or *MRR* cover art have not appeared in a Yates collection before, they are still instantly recognizable to anyone who has seen them.

The content of this book seems like it was put together quickly, although the layout/design of the package is marvelous. The images seem attached to their text associatively, with no real attempt at making the images and text flow together to give the one-two punch of earlier Yates work. It's a shame, because his wit and playfulness is desperately needed to combat the intellectual vacuity of our government. Maybe his next collection will fill this need, because this one certainly does not.
—Jesse Luscious

A New World in our Hearts
edited by Roy San Filippo
148 pages • $11.95
AK Press • 674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1163

Subtitled "Eight Years of Writings from the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation," this book is a terse representation of what Love and Rage has meant for the North American Anarchist scene over the past fifteen years. To some extent this is a telling of the story of a split from one side (of two, or possibly three). Love and Rage was an International Anarchist Federation (US, Mexico, and Canada) that lasted just less than ten years (from 1989 to around 1998). It changed from a network that produced a paper to a federation that attempted, in fits and starts, to articulate a unified theory of social transformation. What they ended up with was a bit of a mess.

The story of Love and Rage cannot be told without talking about the political pedigree of its constituency. A quarter of the founders of Love and Rage came from the Trotskyist Revolutionary Socialist League, which contributed to the sense that Love and Rage was removed from the mainstream of Anarchist sensibility. Love and Rage contributed to this sense with its explicit desire to integrate the concerns and knowledge of the New Left into their anti-authoritarianism. They did this by stepping on many (possibly more traditional) Anarchist toes by calling for a political strategy of Revolutionary Pluralism, which they defined as the combined effort not only of the proletariat, but of women, people of color, and oppressed nationalities. This articulation was fairly antagonistic to the traditional grassroots and utopian strains that normally comprise anarchist strategy, eventually causing a rift within Love and Rage where a sizeable minority staked their claim more firmly in the Marxist/Maoist camp.

The actual political work that Love and Rage advocated for distilled itself (through their varies attempts to formalize their politics) into a strategy of prisoner support (ABC), support of the EZLN, and participation in Anti-Racist Action—too innocuous and not enough action to hold together the aspirations of a federation that aspired to social revolution. On the one hand, taking activist work seriously has been a shortcoming for anarchists ever since the first Crass album came out. On the other hand, you have "serious" (read: humorless) revolutionaries that recognized the weakness of organizing the reproles (read: Gen Xers) along the lines of these practices. Politically, this differentiation was developed in a document titled "What We Believe," in which adherents to anarchism (as opposed to the more loosely evolving "anti-authoritarianism" of Love and Rage) struggled against the Marxist pedagogy that was beginning to voice itself, and against the "white supremacy" essentialism endemic in the rising influence of the Race Traitor analysis in Love and Rage.

The editor of this book, Roy San Filippo, is fairly clear in the introduction of this book where he stands in the sectarian splits that ultimately dissolved Love and Rage (even if he doesn't put it quite that way).

> "The WWB (What We Believe) document...ultimately pushed Love and Rage from an organization in deep crisis to disintegration. Although most of the document simply reiterated vague and unobjectionable principles of anarchism, it advocated two highly contentious positions. First, system white privilege was dismissed in the document as 'petty and apparent' privileges of white workers over workers of color... Second WWB advocated that the failures of contemporary anarchist theory could be solved 'from within anarchism' a position that was even more controversial than the document's position on race."

This passage highlights exactly what was controversial about Love and Rage, and what is controversial about this book. Love and Rage collapsed because its main theorists became far less interested in what a revolutionary anarchist federation could look like than what the composition of the most-likely-to-succeed revolutionary organization would look like. While it is relevant to ask the question about just how successful an anarchist politic could be in a yet-to-be-determined social revolution, it is just as important to approach the question as to whether a revolution would be worth having if it were not explicitly anarchist.

The detritus of these questions remains in the form of two organizations, one hoping to become national in scope, another that is regional. Bring the Ruckus (of which the editor of this book is a member) originated in Phoenix, Arizona around a "charismatic leader" who was involved in Love and Rage, and symbolized the faction of Love and Rage associated with Noel Ignatiev's *Race Traitor* publication and politic. Bring the Ruckus has a few chapters throughout the nation, and expects to become a full organization to "encourage the development (of the) revolutionary working class movement" later in 2003. Their political strategy centralizes white supremacy as the most vulnerable component of the current system. Their political development owes as much to the Black Panther Party as it does to anarchism. NEFAC (the North-Eastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists) stretches from Quebec to Baltimore, with member collectives in most of the included major cities. As their acronym implies, their political articulation is traditional anarcho-communism with the added twist that they are a "Platformist" organization. This refers to an anarchist response from a group of Russian ex-patriots that calls for a more rigorous "organizational position" than most anarchists at the time (or even today) felt comfortable with. That stated, NEFAC does not clearly position itself as an organization with a revolutionary agenda. Instead they state, "The federation's activities are organized around theoretical development, anarchist propaganda, and intervention in the struggle of our class, be it autonomously or by direct involvement in social movements."

Which leads the reader to question the usefulness of this book. The sectarian struggles within the anarchist milieu inspire discussion and contemplation among the participants of the struggle, but that that audience is not very large, and most of these arguments have long since been settled. Historically, there is an argument that there have only been a few essays written about the Love and Rage experience, and that it deserves a more complete telling. This is very much not what San Filippo choose to do with this text. The book is very short, given that the organization had an at least quarterly publication for close to ten years. The texts highlighted the twilight of the organization and not the foundation (most explicitly, not the major split in the early 90s that left a bad taste in the mouths of most North American anarchists). The emphasis clearly has a political motivation. While the centrality of white supremacy and the efficacy of anarchism as a revolutionary strategy are two great questions that Love and Rage brought front and center to the North American anarchist scene, they are not the only questions that we grapple with. As the fall of the Soviet Union, the "victory" in Seattle, the most recent Gulf War, and the complete apoliticization of the body politic has demonstrated since the fall of Love and Rage, they are not even the most relevant. That appears to be the fate of the so-called revolutionary anarchism of which this book is an ideological holdout.

—Aragorn!

Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader
Collected by Dark Star
118 pages • $15.00
AK Press

If any two words deserved to be hyphenated as one they would be "anarchism" and "feminism." Both words hold a multitude of meanings and interpretations that often contradict other commonly held perceptions. Both terms are prone to slander and have fallen in and out of several subcultures' favor, though they have been consistently loathed by the mainstream. The unity of these two feared movements in any form is empowering enough to strike terror in the hearts of patriarchal hierarchies everywhere, even in the pit—so watch your step.

Quiet Rumours explores various inspiring voices of the anarcha-feminist "movement," spanning generations and perspectives. The Dark Star Collective previously published many of these articles as pamphlets. Now bound collectively, these varying outlooks complement each other, creating a larger whole. For such a short volume, *Quiet Rumours* is densely packed with historical background, theory, and personal discovery.

Quiet Rumours lays the foundation of why "feminism practices what anarchism preaches" and discusses the intertwined history of feminist and anarchist movements. From female Abolitionists realizing the hypocrisy of fighting to end slavery at a time when women's rights were limited to watching women get written out of the Constitution with the use of the word "men" for the first time in the 14th Amendment, "the land of the free and the home of the brave" has never been a "pro-female" mecca. Emma Goldman's "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" clearly exposes the limits of emancipation and confines this new independence. Women were hopeful that emancipation would "make it possible for women to be human in the truest sense" with great freedoms and opportunities blossoming, but women's new options were often more demoralizing. More options (for a human to be exploded by gender wage discrepancies) became available for women, but they continued to return home to fulfill traditional expectations of wife, mother, and homemaker. Women discuss how these phenomena affected women's rights in the long term and how "learned passivity" has prevailed. Historically, when women obtain power within traditional power structures the power silences individuals more than it transforms any ruling dynamic.

When Peggy Kornegger discussed reasons why anarchist movements have not flourished, she starts by commenting that humans are not "practiced" at self-governing. She makes it obvious that each time we form small collectives, speak our voices, and work to benefit our entire communities, we are practicing to make anarchy a sustainable reality. Only through personal transformations, sharing ideas with each other, and practice can we become more ready to take on the responsibility of self-governing. The second point she addresses is how the Left undermines change. When playing by established rules there might be some avenues for change, but with faulty ballot boxes and all political personalities coming to office with their own agendas, mostly funded by big business interests, the hope for any real change "might be" delusional. I still believe in trying to be heard in this substandard system, but dismal reality glooms from every front page with horrific choices being made by governing bodies.

"Instead in of getting discouraged and isolated now, we should be in our small groups...actively engaging in and creating feminist activity, because we all thrive on it, in the absence of [it], women take tranquilizers, go insane, and commit suicide." —Cathy Levine

Voltairine deCleyre shares her journey from being a daughter of a communist to being a socialist to being an anarchist. She reviews how easy it was for her to identify with and then dismiss socialism. This is an interesting thread throughout several other articles. Women often embrace socialist theory and movements because of the nurturing and collective aspects, but there is an element that is missing with heavy-handed governmental agencies calling the shots. The discussion of how anarchy and socialism work together is an interesting exchange, especially when written about by women—anarchy, viewed as what should not be (bosses, rulers, masters, etc.), and socialism as all the supportive things that can be built by people, for people, without governing bodies to dictate how and to whom services will be created and disbursed.

Consumerism, on the other hand, suppresses and pacifies the masses more than oppressive police states in these days of spreading capitalist wants. Women are marketed to with a vengeance. For home, beauty, family, and all the trappings of success, women are expected to be deeply involved with shopping, a woman's hobby. The ability to have excess possessions and economic power to subjugating other humans (working class women included) is becoming "spineless and idealless creation(s) of material needs." Breaking away from false revolutions masking capitalism as "hip" is a necessary step for all women (and men).

Quiet Rumours presents a quality sample of material to begin the search for independence from governmental constrains and gender expectations. These women are inspiring, as their voices echo from near and far with hope for women and all people.
—Tobia Jean

Driving with Shannon
S. Robinson
277 pages • $21.95
Publish America
www.publishamerica.com

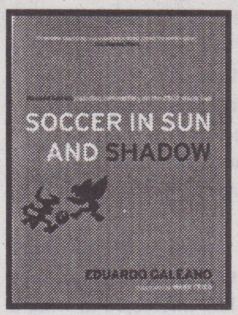
Two teenage punk rockers run away from home (and Maine), travel across the US, and end up in the Southwest. This takes place in the early 1980s, when being a visible punk was a risky thing, liable to get you hassled by the Man and beaten down by rednecks and jocks, not to mention the hassle given by one's parents. With this in mind, you can get a small idea of the situations these kids get into driving through this great land.

I am amazed at the knowledge of 80s punk and the genuine feelings of pain and hopelessness S. Robinson is able to convey in this book. He was there. This book is semi- autobiographical.

This is a book for the punks. Nowadays, we seem to really love referencing. We have bands and zines who take entire styles of past punk glories and make it their own. Bands quote elder punk lyrics in their new songs. Zines and bands are named after previously existing punk songs. I dig this. *Driving With Shannon* is also hearkening to the past, the difference being that it actually does take place then. Every chapter is headed by a quote from a punk band, these quotes relating to the chapter's contents. From the Germs, to GBH, to the Angry Samoans, the author is stunning in his ingenuity and insight as to how these songs *really* related to the lives of these old punks. Almost as if all the punks had gotten together and written all the songs as a group.

Driving with Shannon also successfully and truthfully (often with disgusting painfulness) deals with more average teenage situations, like sex/love and drugs. These experiences that are more shared with the rest of society are always treated from the angle of a young punk. Self-destruction, self-hate, pity, fashion, and ways to charge one's mohawks are other topics talked about.

So yeah, all folks can get some enjoyment from this shit. You straight, societal types will like the great storytelling. We old punks will love the reminiscing factor and how well the author is able to describe who we were. And the kids might understand our bitterness and hope and dedication if they read this prize sample of the world of the punks of the 1980s. This book is that good.
—Jake "Old Man" Filth



Soccer in Sun and Shadow
Eduardo Galeano (translated by Mark Fried)
244 pages • $17.00
Verso • 180 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014-4606

Who cares about sports? Aren't the jocks our traditional enemies? Isn't football, in the words of Robert Downey, Jr. (in Rodney Dangerfield's magnum dopus *Back to School*), a "crypto-fascist metaphor for violent land acquisition"? I won't defend American football, but we're talking about true football here—soccer!

Sure, it's usually just a bunch of sweaty, aggro dudes chasing around a leather ball made in a sweatshop overseas by child labor. And the jocks usually beat the ragtag anarchist teams the way the better-funded pro teams can grease their goddamn paths to championships. But I can't dismiss soccer, the world's sport, as entirely corrupt and irredeemable. Time and again, the game overcomes racism, the Fascist's propaganda teams, and the first world's assumed hegemony to offer personal liberation for players and a collective reprieve for spectators.

And who better to grant a readerly version of soccer's hope than Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano? His *Open Veins of Latin America* leads directly to lines here like: "Few things happen in Latin America that do not have some direct or indirect relation with soccer. Whether it's something we celebrate together, or a shipwreck that takes us all down, soccer counts in Latin America, sometimes more than anything else, even if it is ignored by ideologues who love humanity but can't stand people."

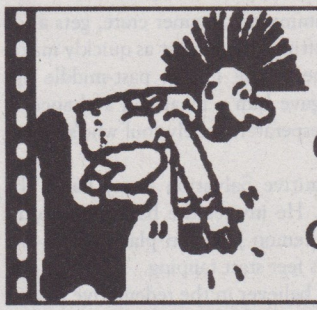
This revised edition of Galeano's 1998 *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* adds fifteen or so pages, and these new chapters continue to trace soccer's descent into commercialization. Whether it's the lack of playful footwork, the commercials interrupting the matches, the failure in 1994 to start a player's union, the painful homogenization of strategy and defense, or the nigh-untouchable power of soccer's ruling body FIFA, all of capitalism's struggles are played out here in the soccer field.

Galeano's more of a storyteller here than a historian, but the 150 or so page-length entries offer an engaging version of why soccer matters. Tell me it's not a glorious victory for Senegal to defeat their former colonizer France on a world stage. Or a crushing metaphor for the current state of affairs when Mexico lost to the United States. Look no further than the jerseys (or FIFA's Swiss bank accounts) to see how business influences the game.

For all his passion for the sport and justified anger, Galeano still lapses into the occasional ham-fisted hyperbole and annoyingly vague passage. His sympathy for hero/martyrs like Maradona is understandable, but not very journalistic: "Diego Armando Maradona never used stimulants before matches to stretch the limits of his body. It is true that he was into cocaine, but only at sad parties." Speculation? Or was Galeano at that sad party and in the locker room before the match?

When you're done with the fine introduction to the sport this book offers, read *Dynamo: Defending the Honor of Kiev* for more historical context about the infamous Nazi game. Or *Among the Thugs*, if you're interested in sheer hooliganism. Hell, check out the movie *Victory* if you want to see how Hollywood digests and romantically disfigures sport. See ya in the pitch, dude.
—Travis Fristoe

MOVIES



BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

If you are looking for a reason to clean up your act, check out **If I Should Fall From Grace: The Shane MacGowan Story**. It is difficult and fascinating to watch. Especially when a drunken, drooling MacGowan spits out his history and philosophy on punk. The extreme close-ups of his toothless grin and incomprehensible words are accompanied by a wheezing laugh. It makes me wonder what the hell happened. Yet, when I see the opening live performance in 2000, I realize that this is what his image has become. Is it possible to imagine a sober MacGowan?

The documentary follows Shane and girlfriend Victoria Clarke around through what I assume is a regular evening of pub crawling and drinking. The night's activities are interspersed with footage from the Nipple Erectors (The Nips), early Pogues stuff, and newer footage with the Popes. There are interviews with his father Maurice MacGowan, and his mother Therese, along with his other relatives and friends. All of these people regard Shane as a very intelligent man. "He had a brilliant mind. (pause) Still has it, a few billion brain cells later," his father admits. Yet through all the drinking and drug use, MacGowan still seems to be able to remember where he's come from. "There is only one punk band: the Sex Pistols. The rest of them are rubbish. I'm not interested in them. What's more, I probably wouldn't have been that interested in them if Johnny Rotten hadn't been so bloody obviously Irish," he insinuates. Everyone knows the famous shots of MacGowan as a young punk at a Sex Pistols show. Yet, his own pride in his Irish heritage doesn't really come until after he's already been in a few bands.

Unfortunately, by the end **If I Should Fall From Grace: The Shane MacGowan Story** is as incomprehensible as MacGowan himself. For the uninitiated, like myself, the inclusion of a supposed feud with Sinead O'Connor makes no sense. It is not explained. People interviewed insinuate that O'Connor was using MacGowan to boost her credibility, but Clarke's comments about O'Connor doing the song to help Shane sort out his relationship with her contradict the implications. It seems O'Connor was bailing him out. A quick search on the internet reveals that MacGowan is pissed off because O'Connor called the police on him when he was passed out on heroin. I guess the filmmaker didn't consider the context of any importance.

The DVD has some nice extras. There is conversation between MacGowan and Steve Jones of the Sex Pistols. It is interesting even though they are supposed to be discussing the "old days" and they don't ever seem to do that. There is also the full interview with Nick Cave and a sing-along-with-the-Pogues section. The latter is basically three Pogues videos with subtitles so you can join in on the fun.

Another interesting musical character is Wesley Willis. **The Daddy Of Rock & Roll** has the potential of being a great documentary. How could you go wrong with a personality like Wesley Willis? There are good parts, but overall it seems like barely an attempt.

The Daddy Of Rock & Roll follows Willis around his native Chicago on his daily routine. He talks of his demons that tell him what to do. He drops in on friends and they give bits of an insight into who the man is. One woman recalls how she met Willis at an art store and later let him move in with her. Initially, it was to be for a few days, but became a few years. Another woman discusses his treatment with anti-psychotic drugs. Her opposition is that it affects his art. Someone mentions that Willis was abused as a child and his mother was using drugs. Steve Albini tells his story about seeing Willis in a train station in the 80s that gives a nice insight into Willis. Unfortunately, this bit is merely included as a DVD outtake.

Through all these little bits I was able to put together thoughts on what is going on with Willis. However, it's all just conjecture. I'd like to think the filmmaker was trying to recreate a schizophrenic feeling for the viewer. I just came out of it wanting more. A little more effort put into this documentary would probably reveal the great story that I know is lurking there.

Everyone has his or her own idea of what punk rock is. I don't argue. How can I? I just know what I consider punk. Frankly, I have a hard time putting emo and metal in with definition of punk. At a party recently, I was trying to explain to someone who had no idea what I was talking about that professional punk* is not punk at all. He couldn't understand and I gave up. What do I care? I'm sure he won't be picking up a FM Knives record any time in the future.

Watching the **Michiganfest 2002** DVD just made me wonder what the fuck happened to punk rock. I know I've been around a lot longer than most of these kids at this fest, but why has it come to this? I always try to maintain an open mind, but when faced with crap like this it's impossible. I couldn't even watch one of the thirty bands all the way through. I found myself mentally recalling different points in musical history when things had gone awry: hardcore going metal, funk bass being added to rock bands, super sensitive, politically correct lyrics. Ugh.

When one of my roommates returned from work jokingly telling me to turn the music down, he commented that all these bands sound like Styx or Genesis with shitty equipment. "It's true!" I screamed. In between each performance was a clip with a band answering the question, "What 80s band would you like to cover?" Invariably the answer was a metal band such as Van Halen, Night Ranger, or Poison. Someone said Pat Benatar, but is that really any better? The only band that came to their senses was Hot Snakes, who said, "I hate metal. That's why I got into punk rock." I suspect they are even older than I am.

On the filmmaking side, **Michiganfest 2002** is very well done, with multi-camera shots of each band. The sound is directly from the mixing board so there is barely any bass. There are a lot of bands: Arab On Radar, Casket Lottery, Death Cab For Cutie, Vaz, Isis, Owls, Oxes, Small Brown Bike, Dillinger 4, and many more. If any of these strike your fancy, I'm sure you will enjoy this DVD. It's as if you're right up there on stage. Me? I've left the building.

*Michael Millett of Broken Rekids coined the term "professional punk." Thanks to him for it.

For more info on these DVDs go to:
If I Should Fall From Grace and **The Daddy Of Rock & Roll**:
www.musicvideodistributors.com
Michiganfest 2002: www.bifocalmedia.com

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o MRR PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. You can also reach me by email at carolynmrr@juno.com

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI

OSCAR'S LEFTOVERS

The wisdom of the Motion Picture Academy leaves a lot to be desired, but their nominees for foreign film usually seem to be spot-on. Here's your chance to catch up on some recent and upcoming releases.

The story for **Nowhere in Africa** is based on the best-selling autobiographical novel by Stepfanie Zwieg, and tells the story of a gifted child who, with her parents, escapes to Kenya just before the Nazi machine clamps down on Germany. The film adaptation, by Caroline Link, is expansive and emotional.

Their family escapes the Nazi threat, but Jettel Redlich (Juliane Kohler) grumbles that they couldn't be much worse off than where they are now. Hired as co-proprietor of a small farm, she's worn down by the heat and bored to tears of the isolation. She's used to the good life, and Kenya can only giver her long, languid days and prickly nights with her husband. Boxes of dresses molder as fashion passes her by, while her husband Walter (Merab Ninidze) is desperate to find even a reliable supply of water. The couple has escaped the Holocaust, but here it's like a lingering death. But when one after another of her letters to her family in Germany goes unanswered, Jettel realizes she has to be thankful for everything.

In the meantime, their daughter Regina (played by Lea Kurka as a child, and Karoline Roberts as a young adult) comes into her own in a boarding school—which her parents can barely afford. The schoolmaster is careful to delineate between his Christian and Jewish students, but is soon won over by Regina's intelligence and sincerity.

And so it goes, one episode linked to the next until the narrative comes to resemble something like a human life. For that reason alone, the film is more convincing, especially when the story makes unexpected detours into new territory. When war fears loom heavy, Jettel and her family are carted away to a South African "camp" by the Brits, who still see the German emigrants as potential Nazi sympathizers. But the Brits deliver them to a posh luxury resort, where the proprietors are unwilling to compromise on the cost or quality of their service to the prisoners.

For Regina, Africa gives her a certain racial colorblindness. When she strikes up a strong friendship with the family's Masai cook Owuor (Sidede Onyulo), the idea of black, white, Gentile, or Jew never comes up. He's with a man of standing and dignity who supports several wives through his work. This girl may be the only white person who appreciates his status.

When war tensions relax, Regina slips off to spend time with the indigenous people, learning their language, eating their food, and even inviting her mother to watch a memorable all-night ritual. For reasons like these, Africa exerts an unanticipated pull on the two women.

The Kenya of **Nowhere in Africa** begins as an inhospitable pressure cooker for the family, a depressing nowhereland, but soon becomes something like home. When a screeching swarm of locusts sweeps through the area (one of the film's most expert sequences), all must invest themselves in their country, adopted or not. And not soon after, the family must choose between their old homeland, Germany, and the new land that has laid a claim on them.

In Aki Kaurismaki's **The Man Without a Past,** the setting is the present day, though the director's free play with movie conventions make it seem vaguely retro at times. It's also the most amusing of the year's Oscar picks, a fractured parable on human identity.

Soon after a welder (Markku Peltola) arrives at Helsinki station, he's mugged by a band of young thugs and left by a river, where he's further relieved of his boots by a vagrant. When two young children chance upon him, he's a broken man, his face hidden by his welder's mask.

After a few desperate moments in the emergency room, the anonymous man flatlines, and the doctors give up on him. Of course, there wouldn't be much of a movie if he died right there, and the hardy Finn suddenly resurrects, pulling off all but his facial bandages, starting his life with a blank slate.

In these cold northern climes, survival is often abetted by the kindness of strangers, and it's this kind of charity that becomes a kind of training wire for the man's new life. He can't remember his name, his home, or his occupation, but an impoverished family takes him in and nurtures him to recovery.

He sets himself up in an aluminum container crate, gets a job with the Salvation Army sorting and lifting, and almost as quickly makes his first moves on Irma (Kati Outinen), the lonely, past-middle age Salvation Army lieutenant who first gave him a meal and a chance. If anyone needed salvation, it's her—a desperately lonely soul who's all but given up on love.

After listening to their primitive Salvation Army band, the man suggests they update their sound. He invites the band over to his crate to listen to the blues. As Blind Lemon Jefferson plays on his one piece of furniture, a jukebox, the band's feet start tapping.

Kaurismaki has shown a firm believer in the redemptive powers of rock 'n' roll since his hilarious **Leningrad Cowboys Do America,** but **The Man Without a Past** goes one step beyond that. Even straight-laced Irma can't get to sleep at night without "Do the Shake" blaring from her boombox. Salvation Army charity meals become blues jams, and the down-and-outers who eat there finally have Finnish blues to warm their stomachs and their souls.

Kaurismaki, whose films often mix faux melodrama with sardonic Finnish humor, plays it straight here—or at least a little straighter than usual. (This is, after all, the story of an amnesiac who loves the blues and nudges a Salvation Army band toward rock 'n' roll, among other things.) Kaurismaki lays in enough human details along the way to give his leisurely tale more than its share of emotional currency.

Certainly the most awe-inspiring of the foreign film nominees is **Hero,** a Chinese effort still struggling to earn a major release. Those who, like me, were disappointed with **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon** may find comfort in this vast dynastic saga, which puts its emphasis on a succession of tense action sequences and period set pieces that are nothing short of eye-popping.

Two millennia ago, China was divided into seven kingdoms. Qin Shuhaung (Chen Dao Ming), who aimed to unify China, was the most ruthless and domineering. The story is told in an intricate series of flashbacks, as an incomparably skilled swordsman called Nameless gains the emperor's trust by killing off his most dangerous adversaries. Sky (Donnie Yen), a master of spear fighting, is the first victim. The expertise of Sky and Nameless is so great that they duel in their minds, like a game of go, until one can determines the other's fatal weakness.

Now, Flying Snow (Maggie Cheung) and Broken Sword (Tony Leung) are the main rebel leaders remaining, respectively a great swordswoman and master calligrapher. The Qin army attempts to subjugate them with their archery—an astonishing sequence in which the sky turns black with one volley after another of enemy arrows. But the rebels have another plot in the works that has every chance of foiling the Qin.

Hero is extravagant in every inch of its widescreen visual design. As in most major martial arts fantasies, the heroes fly while using the martial arts—a visual shorthand for showing the legendary powers gained from years of practicing tai chi skills; here, the action is presented in magnificent slow-motion scenes. For the Qin, the display of iron-clad warriors continues beyond the horizon. But there are subtler pleasures, too. One almost poetic fight between Broken Sword and Nameless occurs on the surface of a glassine lake, and a later challenge between two woman rivals happens in a forest dense with autumn leaves—an awesome rendering of action and color.

With his faultless visual sense, Director Zhang Yimou (Red Sorghum, Ju Dou, Shanghai Triad) was the perfect choice for this film, capturing the story's gravity and heroic scope. **Hero** is a spectacle of the best kind.

Comments? Email me at sjspinali@yahoo.com

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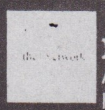

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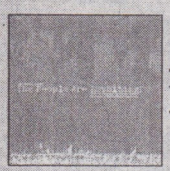

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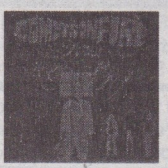

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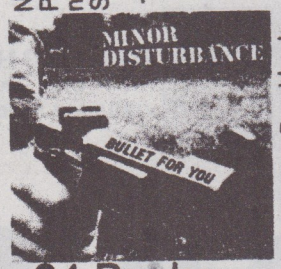

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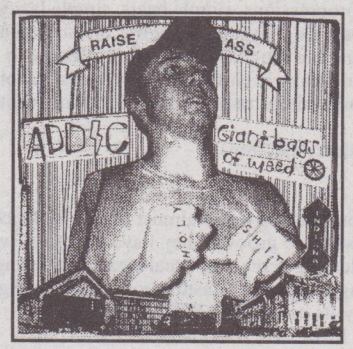
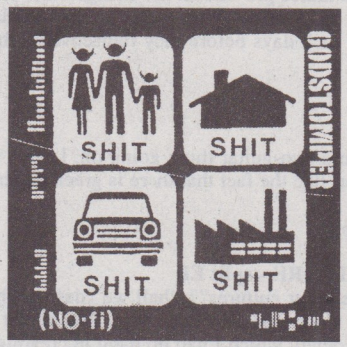


2 TON PREDATOR – "Demon Dealer" CD

New wave Swedish death/power groove metal played with a modern appeal. Reminds me a little of AT THE GATES, or maybe even a little bit of SKINLAB. This is a really tight band that plays with strong technical execution, though the lyrics are a bit too cheesy and the music not unique, especially when comparing them to some of the other bands of the Swedish death metal genre. I would still totally recommend this record to fans of the style. (LG)
(Diehard Music, A/S, Vindegade 101, 5000 Odense C DENMARK, www.diehardmusic.com)

20 MINUTES DE CHAOS / EXCREADORES – split LP

Hailing from France (land of berets, poodles, and most importantly, freedom fries), 20 MINUTES DE CHAOS crank out five tracks of riff-heavy, metallic yet melodic punk with snarly female vocals that bring to mind LOST WORLD's singer. Lots of double bass and crunchy guitars—though I don't recall them being so METALLICA-esque on prior releases, it's kept enough in check that I can deal. On the flip we have Brazil's EXCREADORES, who crank out sick tracks of ripping Brazilian hardcore that borrow much from the RATOS DE PARÃO model—charging bull drums, thick but raw guitars, and a multiple vocalist attack. They're the definite winner of this split piece of wax. (MT)
(Maloka, BP 536-21014, Dijon Cedex, FRANCE, maloka.distro@free.fr)



ACTIVES – "Reactivated" LP

Limited to 500 copies, this LP contains various demo and unreleased tracks from the ACTIVES, one of the many bands that made up the UK '82 scene. Taking the earlier melodic '77-style British punk and infusing it with the rough and tumble approach of the likes of DISCHARGE, the ACTIVES, along with others of the time, represented the second wave of British punk rock—an angrier and rawer approach toward the initial bomb blast. The sound quality on here is pretty fucking great across the board, and while by it's no means essential stuff, this is a pretty good documentation of yet another of those obscure bands from twenty-odd years ago. (MT)
($18 ppd: Intimidation, PO Box 14627, Leven, Fife, KY82ZD, SCOTLAND, www.intimidationrecords.com)

ADDC / GIANT BAGS OF WEED – split EP

GIANT BAGS OF WEED plays the kind of sloppy poppy punk rock that takes a cue from a band like CRIMPSHRINE, and they remind me of newer bands like the INSURGENT and BEFORE THE FALL. If you are into most stuff like that, you may like them. ADDC, a band that springs from the incestuous group of punks that make up many Chattanooga bands, rock the school. They remind me of a more lo-fi JACK PALANCE BAND. Great four track recordings of melodic punk. As with the previous Half Day Records releases, this one is nicely put together with lots of colors and drawings. Good release. (WR)
(Half Day, PO Box 3381, Bloomington, IN 47402)

AGATHOCLES – "Bomb Brussels" LP

Ah yes, good ole' AGATHOCLES. The grindcore kings mince their way through 17 more tracks of ear-damaging, throat-busting gruntcore. All the tracks here were recorded back in 1996 including a few live tracks. This comes on clear vinyl and is limited to 500 copies. (RC)
(Badger 1)

AGATHOCLES / GODSTOMPER – split EP

AGATHOCLES and GODSTOMPER, together at last. The AGATHOCLES side is an abusive live set—total noise destruction. Must've been hell on the ears. GODSTOMPER's two songs are thick with damaged distortion and a noisier sound than their last couple of releases. For fans of both bands, these songs will fit nicely between other recordings on a tape or collection, but this would be a terrible place to start if you've never heard either groups before. Limited to 500 copies. (WM)
(Haunted Hotel, PO Box 348, Yonkers, NY 10710)

AGNOSTIC FRONT / DISCIPLINE - split 2xLP

Yes! AGNOSTIC FRONT and DISCIPLINE have a barnstorming double live LP out for you skins and punks! The deluxe package is on colored vinyl with great flash tattoo-style art on the front, and is called *Working Class Heroes*. Both AGNOSTIC FRONT and DISCIPLINE turn in stellar performances at the Belgian Club 't Lintabriek. AGNOSTIC FRONT plays great tunes like "Believe," "Victim in Pain," "Last Warning," "Before My Eyes," "United Blood," and the IRON CROSS classic, "Crucified." DISCIPLINE plays first-rate streetpunk songs like "Now or Never," "Young and Reckless," "Our Pride," "Rejects of Society," "Frontline Skins," and covers of COCK SPARRER's "Runnin Riot" and the LAST RESORT's "Violence in our Minds." A must-have for all skins and punks! (BR)
(Knockout, Postfach 100716, 46527 Dinslaken, GERMANY, www.knock-out.de)

THE ALLEGED GUNMEN – "Audio Invasion/Farewell to Tragedy"

Excellent artwork and colored vinyl enhance the fine packaging of this eclectic release. The ALLEGED GUNMEN sound like some low energy groove *London Calling/Sandinista*-era Clash effort. (HM)
(Kapow!, PO Box 286, Fullerton, CA 92836, www.kapowrecords.com)

ALLERGIC TO WHORES – "Life Through Death's Eyes" CD

This is fast, distortion-packed punk from Cleveland, Ohio that has some passionate moments of melody, pulling in a total rhythmic DC-style influence. The vocals are forced and sound angry, as the singer spouts off dark, personal lyrics. In all honesty, I have not heard a lot of their earlier material, but from I remember it wasn't quite so melodic. This is pretty average by my standards. (RC)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134, rodentpopsicle.com)

ALUMINUM BABE – "Oh Yeah" CD

I suppose there will always be a place for two-chord punk…no, wait, there's that third chord. This is the kind of band that most people start when they're thirteen, except I'm pretty confident that these people are all adults. Simple is the word of the day here: simple progressions, simple beats, simple lyrics (though one song is in French, which I always appreciate being a closet frog myself, the words are so ridiculous that you wonder why the singer even bothered putting them in another language…oh, wait, perhaps to cover up their ridiculousness? Ah, now it all makes sense). This would have been fun for two songs; unfortunately, there are five on this EP. As Sean Connery proclaims in that ubiquitous movie trailer, I too am "waiting to be impressed." (MX)
(Mother West LLC, 132 W. 26th St., NYC 10001, **www.motherwest.com**)

ALWAYS DIE FIGHTING "War Within Oneself" CD

Metalcore influenced metalcore that has a hardcore, and at times almost power-violence, feel to it—the vocals bring to mind the almighty DYSTOPIA, as well the grooves they have going on (visions of slow-motion circle pit scenes in my head) between the unrelenting screamed vocal assault and gang choruses. At first glance/listen they come off as a better than average tough guy, testosterone-fueled chugga chugga outfit. Goes to prove the old adage not to judge a book by its cover, eh? (WM)
(Wounded Paw, 26 Brookfield St., Toronto, ON, CANADA, M6J 3A9, www.woundedpaw.com)

AMAZOMBIES – "Bitches And Stitches" CD

Twelve tracks of rockin', female-driven punk. The ladies provide all the stringed instruments and the vocals, and a glorious sound it is, too. Reminds me a lot of American West Coast punk of the late 70s—AVENGERS, DILS, or the MUTANTS on 45—punk in the rock days before they rediscovered the garage. (RK)
(Go-Kart, www.Gokartrecords.com)

ANATOMY OF A GHOST- "Evenesce" CD

Like CURSIVE but with female vocals, this band has the emo two-guitar thing going on. I think it's really rad that these kids are trying to take that sound a little further, like the fact that there is green ketchup on the market. (MM)
(Fearless, 13772 Goldenwest St. #545, Westminster, CA 92683)

ANOTHER OPPRESSIVE SYSTEM / WORLD ON WELFARE - split EP

Dear AOS, do you really think I should "embrace other cultures"? Shall we "destroy the corrupt white punk"? I guess I could try to be Chicano or maybe a Castro queer, but perhaps they might feel a bit insulted by me interjecting myself in to *their* viable, living society which I had no hand in creating. We (the punx) are, unfortunately, predominately white, middle class people who have rejected the paradigm set up for us since before our birth. We respect, accept, and occasionally work with our country's other subcultures. Punks, albeit at a later age than is normal, are born into hardcore, much as the kids in North Oakland are born into Ghost Town and Gypsies are born to Rom. If we don't create a different world for ourselves, who will? So, AOS, what are you talking about? P.S. the music doesn't help in strengthening your ideas, which punk music really should do. Straight-ahead heaviness done with a crust tint. WOW's Cathy has some fucking voice—it be akin to Renee SKARPS vox, but not 100% masculine. One can hear a woman in there. That is nice, considering as how woman are better singers than men. The songs are full of information, so much so that they are almost like reading a CRASS pamphlet. The energy of the music and the obvious care of the players in trying to create some new and exciting hardcore crust punk, while keeping traditional elememts intact, actually combine with the lyrics to birth a baby whose roots and branches go deep. This is a record to get, at least for the WOW side. (JA)
(Brutalitar, crust_kontrol@hotmail.com)

ANTI-ANTI – "Hooray for Everything" CD

Spirited enough RAMONES/SCREECHING WEASEL/QUEERS pop-punk. Lots of songs about girls. Not bad, but lacking that sparkle to stand out from a rather packed genre. (RK)
(Fast Music, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520)

APATIA NO – "El Ruido de Antes…Contra los Opresores de Siempre" LP

For the most part, the 28 tracks on this record were written years ago and captured, with sub-par sound, on DAT, tapes, reels, and CDs. Thanks to assistance from Skuld and Alerta Antifascista, APATIA NO was able to rerecord the songs (in a week!), and they are much improved. The LP also includes tracks from the 2002 EP *Cuando El Rumor Es Informacion*, since they weren't able to include translations at that time, and a few new ones to top it off. Venezuela's APATIA NO works at a single tempo, a driving medium-fast pace with vocals to match. The singer has an unfailingly consistent cadence that tends to obscure the catchy, compelling songwriting, but he is redeemed by the growly or occasionally high-pitched backups from Julia, the guitarist. I also found the album insert very helpful in understanding the nature of unrest between supporters of Venezuela's current Chávez government and the older regime. Reprinted articles examine the role of media coverage in the recent conflicts and call for accountability by the government for protesters who have been injured or killed. Regardless of whether you're already a fan, this is a great release by APATIA NO—I for one am thankful it's seen the light of day. (AC)
(Noseke c/o Johnny, Julia, Miguel, A.P. 64670, Z.P. 1064-A, Caracas, VENEZUELA, apatia_no@hotmail.com)

ARTIMUS PYLE – "Inheritance" EP

ARTIMUS PYLE serves up more great fucking heavy hardcore. I think the best thing that has happened to this band was the acquisition of drummer Jensen from IRON LUNG. The band plays faster than before, without losing any intensity, and although I'm sure I'm missing loads of influences, they remind me of HIS HERO IS GONE. Fucking great Polymorph recording with lots of distortion, which makes this all the better. ARTIMUS PYLE has been a Bay Area band that I always look forward to seeing, and it is too bad they will not be playing around as much anymore. (WR)
(Flowerviolence, Kapellenstrasse 16, 69469 Weinheim, GERMANY, www.flowerviolence.de)

ASS-END OFFEND – "Welcome to the Discomfort Zone" EP

Gotta admit, the name did turn me off at first, but after the needle hit the wax, I was pleasantly surprised. Straightforward, well-executed, dark punk tunes straight out of Montana (of all places) along the lines of early NEUROSIS mixed with a barrage of other, more "new-school" elements. I was especially impressed with ASS-END OFFEND's ear for cool unexpected hooks and changes that worked real well with the explosive nature of the music. Nicely done. (SP)
(Poisoned Candy, PO Box 9263, Missoula, MT 59807, www.poisonedcandy.com)

ASSERT – "Riotous Assembly" CD

New long player from stalwarts of the UK DIY hardcore scene. Super tough, aggressive hardcore which sounds like POISON IDEA and MOTÖRHEAD filtered through a NY hardcore band with harsh, stark, politicized lyrics. I admire them for their work and dedication, and while I found this disc a little samey, it is still a worthy effort. There is an added CD ROM of some live shows, which is a bonus. (TB)
(Malt Soda, PO Box 7611, Chandler, AZ 85246)

ATTENTAT SONORE – "Social Headache" 10"

This French outfit switches off between male and female vocals not unlike DIRT, and their tuneage (which is cleverly edited between the remarks of French politicos) is every bit as socially charged. The tunes tend toward a mid-speed punk attack, with an abrasive powerchord backdrop; their meaty cover of the PARTISAN's chestnut "No U-Turns" comes across as uniquely their own. "Salt Lake Nazis" is a charged lambasting of Mormonism that's worth a listen. (SS)
(Do It Yourself, B.P. 135, 87004 Limoges Cedex 1, FRANCE)

BACKSLIDE – "Terrorage" LP

Gruff German punk sung in English, mid-tempo and tuneful, this is meat and potatoes stuff (*i.e.* it's good but don't be looking for anything out in left field.) They've got the group backing vocals down, and write nice tunes with hooks and harmony. They're not skins but I can see fans of COCK SPARRER and the TEMPLARS liking this—it has that anthemic sound. Maybe KLASSE KRIMINALE would be a good comparison. Solid. (AD)
(Social Bomb, Postfach 10025, 47002 Duisburg, GERMANY)

THE BLANK FIGHT – "House Band Feud" CD

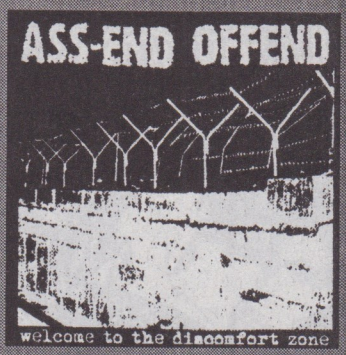
Plan-It-X releases another winner. The BLANK FIGHT was a collaboration between Rymo of THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB, Aaron Cometbus of HARBINGER, and one other fool. And guess what? They ruled! I would describe them as a healthy mix of THIS BIKE IS PIPE BOMB and CRIMPSHRINE (mainly because of Aaron's distinct drumming style), and they actually remind me of SWINGIN' UTTERS (mainly because of the singer's voice). Beware, only five out of thirteen songs on this are unreleased material, the rest were released on a tape and then 7" that came out a few years back. If you are into any of the bands I mentioned, you will be happy with this. For five bucks, there's no better deal. (WR)
($5 ppd; Plan-It-X, 5810 W. Willis Rd., Georgetown, IN 47122)

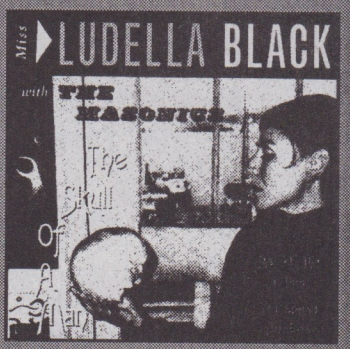
LUDELLA BLACK WITH THE MASONICS – "The Skull of a Man" EP

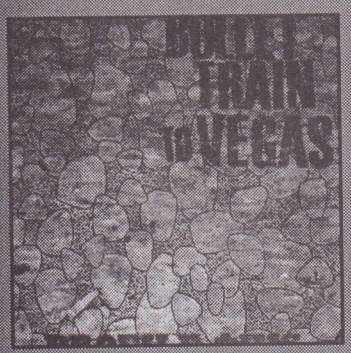
Three mellow 60s-esque ballads that sound nice after a few hours of non-stop listening to messed-up, distorted, trashy garage rock. Ms. LUDELLA BLACK, of THEE HEADCOATEES and DEL MONAS fame, joins forces with the super line-up of the MASONICS to perform songs written by MASONICS' guitarist and former member of THEE MILKSHAKES, Mickey Hampshire. The songs are heartbreaking, but in a good way. (CK)
(Smart Guy, 3288 21st, PMB #32, San Francisco, CA 94110,)

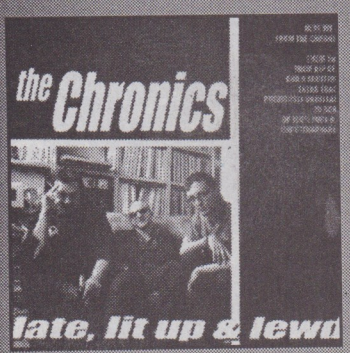
BLACK NIVEA – "Old & Drunk" LP

Old and drunk punks from Germany playing what they describe as "music for the 70s Lovers." I don't think I'm a lover…perhaps more of a fighter. Ah well. I'd say it's more of a watered-down NAKED RAYGUN or BIG BLACK. Then throw in some funny sing-songy rhyming lyrics in awkward Germanized English accents (which were pretty funny in themselves). This record was made for someone out there—could it be you? (AS)
(Last Year's Youth, www.lastyearsyouth.de)









BLACKOUT TERROR - "Education is a..." EP
BLACKOUT TERROR play politically charged metal-core rehashing obnoxious metal guitar cliches and Chomsky-fueled lyrics. There's passion and sincerity behind the music, but nothing to stand out from billions of records just like this one. I can't help but grow numb and apathetic to it. (VH)
(Americandream101, 1182 Chelsea ln., Holiday, FL 43691, UsDream101@aol.com)

THE BLOWTOPS – "Surgeon's Hands" EP
I swear, this band sounds different every time I hear something by them. That's a good thing in my mind. Break up the boredom. Shake up the shit and whatnot. Here the BLOWTOPS sound like the SCIENTISTS when they were in their later post-punk period. Driving melodies and reverb-drenched vocals. It's muddy, there's feedback, and the singer is whispering to me through the headphones. I wish he were whispering directly in my ear. Great version of BIG BLACK's "Deep Six" and cover art by one of my favorite filmmakers Cody Critcheloe, too. (CK)
(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231, blwtop@aol.com)

THE BLOWTOPS – "Tomorrow's Setting Sun/Venom Victims Wine"
I think I like structure. Maybe I don't like it, but I find it comfortable. I say this because I've never been a fan of music that doesn't seem to have focus. I tend to prefer bands that play two-minute songs that are straightforward and light on the extra guitar work. If you can't say it in two minutes, it just might not be worth saying. Anyway, these aren't long songs, but they're a bit much for my small mind. They start, they slow down, they start again, they get loud, and they get mellow. Back in the day, they called this psychobilly—at least I did. It's CRAMPS-ish, but it's not the CRAMPS. It really is no surprise that this was recorded in Memphis. (KK)
(Goodbye Boozy, via Villa Pompetti, 147-64020 S. Nicolo, ITALY)

BLURTERS – "Don't Give a Fuck" CD
More retarded "anti-PC" thug rock from down under. Substandard POISON IDEA Lite played by a bunch of Neanderthals. Why is it so cool to be anti-PC (whatever the fuck that means) these days? I can't decide weather I like their cover of the right wing oi band Combat 84's "Rapist," or their song "Teenage Fuck Machine" more. This CD is a discography of sorts, so if this kind of thing tickles your (very small probably) fancy then you've got 38 tracks to wade through. (TB)
(Snapshot, PO Box 178, Georges Hall, 2198 NSW, AUSTRALIA)

BREAD AND WATER – 12"
Finally a long player from these Texas punks, and what a nice follow-up to the pile of singles they've released over the last few years. Intricate dual guitar riffing that brings to mind ECONOCHRIST with a hint of metallics that echo ANTISCHISM, layered over a driving rhythm section so that it never get bogged down in a wanky noodle-a-thon. Fucking great lyrics dealing with prison labor, animal rights, materialism, and the death penalty—spit out with plenty of snot and venom by frontwoman Amie, with a random intersections of Cookie Monster growls courtesy of the boys in the band. Smashing stuff here. (MT)
(Burrito, PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509-3204, sndidea@ix.netcom.com)

BULLÉT TRAIN TO VEGAS - "Profile This" CD
It's amazing the influence DRIVE LIKE JEHU has had on music. Bands like this one are popping like crazy in my bin here at *MRR*. Not necessarily that it's a bad thing—I like DRIVE LIKE JEHU as much as the next guy. All I'm saying is that it just seems these bands are common these days. This here band sounds a lot like aforementioned band, mixed with SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE. Decent stuff. (AS)
(Letter Bomb, 21661 Brookhurst St. #123, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.letterbombrecordings.com)

CHARLEVOIX – "Begging Complication" CD
Water seems to be the theme of this record. From the abstracted shots of puddles that grace the cover to the more obvious seascapes that fill the insert, the album itself seems to stand as a tribute to our fast-dwindling natural resource. The music even attains a remarkable fluid quality that is hard to describe, but it reminds me of the epic grandeur of MILEMARKER. That's not to say that the songs are long and meandering; CHARLEVOIX also inject a healthy dose of PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES style energy, complete with vocals that have a similar operatic quality as Andrea Zollo herself. My friend once called this type of thing "post-emo," and while I agree that that term is pretty cringe-worthy, I see what he means: once the screamo kids got bored of screaming, they added melody while retaining the intensity and musical complexity. Good news: it rocks. (MX)
(Atarms Mechanics, PO Box 27, Marshall, MI 49068, www.atarmsmechanics.com)

CHIODOS BROS – "The Heartless Control Everything" CD
Emo alert! Emo alert! The first thing I thought was a rock MATES OF STATE, then WHIRLPOOL, then PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES. Indie pop/emo rock with boy/girl action on the vocals. Very nice but very wimpy, very *Punk Planet*... (AD)
(Search and Rescue, PO Box 8260, Ann Arbor, MI 48107)

CHRONICS - "Late, Lit Up, & Lewd" CD
From Italy's Hate Records comes the CHRONICS discography (...so far, anyway). 20 or so no-fuckin'-around songs of catchy punk 'n' roll like the ANGRY SAMOANS, RADIO BIRDMAN, RAMONES, and SCREECHING WEASEL. All tracks taken from a previous LP on Demolition Derby Recs, a 45 on Rip Off, and a couple of live tracks (a NY DOLLS and a BIRDMAN cover). This is pretty good stuff; if I were you (which I'm glad I'm not) I'd get my filthy mitts on this shit. (AS)
(Hate, via di S. Giovanni in Laterano, 192-00184 Roma, ITALY, haters@tiscalinet.it)

CLANGOR/E.H.L. split EP
Hmmm...this is a new one on me: noise-core with melodic breakdowns on the CLANGOR side. Loads of effects and a troublesome recording/mix present a thick wall of near stench, crusty experimental hardcore. Awesome. The EHL (EYE HATE LUCY) side is total audio annihilation slo-mo crust, fucked up, reminding me of SOCIAL INFESTATION if they were as slow as CORRUPTED. The thin four-track recording only

adds to the brutality and intensity. This EP is wrecking me and I'm way into it. Recommended for fans of bands on the edge—pas normal. (WM)
(Absurd, CX Postal 302, Osasco / SP, 06016 -970, BRAZIL, absurd@brfree.com.br)

CLOCKWORK CREW – "Rough Enough" CD

German skinhead (well, except the drummer, but folks are always desperate enough for anyone with a drumkit, that I guess it's always OK for the drummer to look like a SISTERS OF MERCY roadie, who presumably doesn't have to be a skin till the day he dies, shine his boots ready to ruck, etc., etc.) band. They have that early BUSINESS sound down pretty well. Lyrics are the usual unity, fight, fuck type stuff. Don't seem to be particularly right wing. (RK)
(BandWorm, c/o Mark Lorenz, Schellheimerplatz 8, D-39108, Magdeburg, GERMANY, www.oi-punk.de)

THE CLOCKWORK CREW – "Where's the War?!" EP

This here is some German skinhead/oi/street punk. The guitar sounds bored. The choruses are too subdued. The singer sounds like the vocalist from SHAM 69 mixed up with Dick Lucas. This kind of music bores the shit out of me, but if you like oi and street punk you may like this. (JA)
(BandWorm, c/o Mark Lorenz, Schellheimerplatz 8, D-39108, Magdeburg, GERMANY, www.oi-punk.de)

COLD ELECTRIC FIRE / FACE DOWN IN SHIT - split 10"

FACE DOWN IN SHIT somehow pulls off what is generally one of the worst things a band can do to a "hardcore" song by incorporating...I hate to even say it...a violin. It's not overwhelmingly pretentious, some might say it complements the dramatic pot-fueled angst of this heavy, pounding bass driven track. No, it doesn't sound like shit. But it's a joke that anyone would find it compelling enough to warrant the purchase of what boils down to a one-song single. On the other side of this red marble 10", COLD ELECTRIC FIRE's track consists of a monotonous, ten-minute atmospheric wanderings that sound like what you'd hear if you stood in a BART tunnel with your eyes closed and your ear pressed against the change machine. It's so boring it'll make you think GODSPEED YOU BLACK EMPEROR rocks as hard as AC/DC. (VH)
(FDIS, PO Box 66146, Greensboro, NC 27403)

CONCLUSION – EP

On the cover, beneath the next-to-illegible band name, we see a back and white wasteland of burned out buildings and destruction. The only sign of life is, of course, the punks, who stand with their leather-clad backs to us, appraising the rubble. This is a smashing record, with four songs of filthy, sneering Japanese hardcore, spitting up all over itself with both fists up in the air, like the GERMS plus ASSFORT. The forces of chaos are hard at work. Bring the pit home. (AC)
(HG Fact, 105 Nakano Shinbashi-M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano Ku, Tokyo, 164-0013, JAPAN, hgfact@japan.interq.or.jp)

COMETS ON FIRE – CD

San Francisco's COMETS ONE FIRE offer up a self-titled full length for praise (or ridicule) and come out on top. It's nice to hear the band without having to stare at the back of some dude's neck, or wade through beer spilled by an unruly Parkside crowd…I can tell that there's a lot going on in there between the shrieks and lurching rhythsm. The COMETS purvey a swampy goulash of sweaty blues and/or rock 'n' roll, rendered in low fidelity and punctuated by kooky sound effects (beeps, whines, and drones). Spidery and dark, and aural stroll though a thicket of thorn bushes. Theatrical in the same way as labelmates the PHANTOM LIMBS. I've heard it before and heard it better, but the COMETS are still one of the better up-and-coming Bay Area bands that I've suffered exposure to. Virus 301. (JH)
(Alternative Tentacles)

CONFUSIONE – "Angolature Deliranti" EP

Eight cuts of hectic, thrashy punk with vocals very similar in delivery to LOS CRUDOS. That was my initial impression, but as the record wore on I started to notice little deviations here and there. A pinch of MINUTEMEN staccato in certain spots, a more mid-tempo, standard driving style in others. I also found more then one occasion when CONFUSIONE would throw in a heavy breakdown that worked quite well. In my opinion, though, CONFUSIONE suffers a bit from being somewhat generic, but then there is the amount of sincerity and anger in the vocals that seems to make up for it. Rough, but worth checking out. (SP)
(Confusione, c/o Ercoli Alessandro, Corso Laghi 81/91, 10090 Buttiliera Alta, Torino, ITALY, confusione-hc@hotmail.com)

THE CREATURES OF THE GOLDEN DAWN - "Blood from a Stone" EP

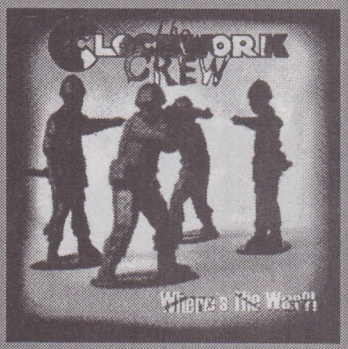
First of all, I oughtta give you lads a good leathering for making me type out that awful name. Secondly, you really need to stop putting butt-naked retro temptresses on the cover of your singles—get me all worked up, then gently tap me over the head with four snail's-paced, deflated garage yawners. Don't mind if I keep the cover and melt the vinyl into an ashtray. Just like the XFL—totally forgettable. (SD)
(Butterfly, PO Box 31225, 08080 Barcelona, SPAIN. www.butterfly-records.com)

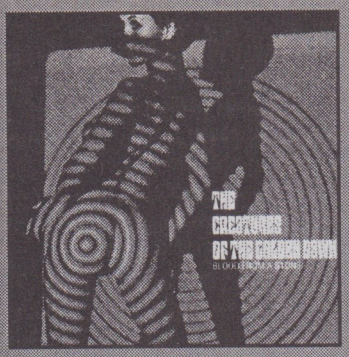
CROPKNOX – "Just Can't Live" EP

Hailing from San Francisco, CROPKNOX plays ripping melodic punk that borrows heavily from the UK '82 style melded with a bit of early YOUTH BRIGADE and SOCIAL DISTORTION (especially on the track "New Solution"). Fists pounding in the air, anthemic punk rock that's sure to get the kids singing along, if only there was a lyric sheet! One of the best new records I've heard in some time. (MT)
(Glue Rot, 30 Camp St, San Francisco, CA 94110, cropknox@rcn.com)

THE CRUNKY KIDS / CONGA FURY – "War Is Over If You Want It" split EP

Hey, the CRUNKY KIDS play some serious manic thrash, on the noise tip. I read their words and still don't know what they are talking about! Cool. First time I ever heard CONGA FURY, on the *Menneskelig Stench Vol. 2* comp, my head blew off, my heart wept like little baby Jesus', and my anus bled. These fucking bastards kill in painful, small steps. As before, the musical chaos actually is like VOID, but this time they throw in some BORN/DEAD, early COC, and some *Pain of Mind* LP—like choruses. The vocalist…her voice is

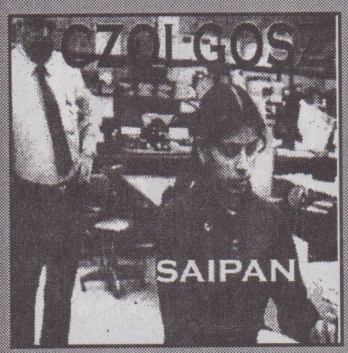




what happens when Seth (PANTY RAID) gets his tits bitten too hard, featuring distortion. In the words of H.P. Lovecraft; this is an indescribable horror. Get this fuckin' record, and see C.F. on their West Coast tour this July. (JA)
(Hibachi, 497 Owego St, Painesville, OH 44077)

CZOLGOSZ - "Saipan" EP

Try saying that three times with a mouth full of crackers. Good solid anarcho punk from Boston here. The anarcho association might have you thinking generic thrash with barked vocals, but this is more old-school anarcho, not quite as innovative as the MOB or ZOUNDS, but still some pretty thought-provoking lyrics backed by rocking, upbeat punk. Also includes contact addresses for various anarchist groups, although not, alas, for the band or label, which I had to look up on t'internet. (AM)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134, www.rodentpopsicle.com)



DOA / THOR – "Are U Ready" split CD

Hmm. Not quite sure what the point of this is. Veteran punk rockers and veteran heavy metal arena-rockers provide six sport-themed songs apiece. Maybe it's a Vancouver hockey thing? DOA's tracks are largely taken from recent records. Fans will already have 'em (and damn good they are too). I'm not that intimate with THOR's material, so I dunno if this is new stuff or not. But he does undoubtedly rock, in an old JUDAS PRIEST/SAXON sort of way. (RK)
(Scratch, www.scratchrecords.com)

DAMAGE DEPOSIT – "That's Not Core Dude" EP

It looks like *MRR* columnist Felix Havoc has got back into the swing of things and is now fronting the new band DAMAGE DEPOSIT. This is pretty much exactly what I expected. Super fast thrashed out hardcore that brings to mind bands like VITAMIN X and DS-13. But knowing Felix's history I am sure the influences run much further back into the punk family tree than that. When it was all said and done, I came away thinking that this record was pretty damn good. I hope they play out in California soon, because I bet their live show will kick it hard as well. (RC)
(Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com/damagedeposit)

DEAD LETTER AUCTION – "Romancing the Actors" EP

DEAD LETTER AUCTION plays mid paced Ebullition-style melodic hardcore. Minor chords and tortured vocals. Maybe like YAPHET KOTTO meets CURRENT with less power. The songs just kind of drag on and don't do much for me. A solid effort, no doubt. (WR)
(Excursions Into the Abyss, PO Box 50138, Ft. Wayne, IN 46805)

DEADLINE – "Back for More..." LP

Sometimes (not often), something turns up that is so good it's difficult to get across in a few short lines how great it is. This LP is absolutely fantastic. Made up of a bunch of folks from London bands more well known for hardcore and oi, this is a punk masterpiece. Well-crafted punchy songs (remember those?) with spine-tingling female vocals (some of the best female vocals I've ever heard). The nearest comparisons I can make are the hooks and harmonies of JOYCE MCKINNEY EXPERIENCE and the punk rock sensibilities of the old '82 band the VIOLATORS (though this is much better than both). Tons of harmonized woah-ohs, and one sing-along classic after another. The song "Last Night" had the hairs standing up on the back of my neck—it reminded me of when I first heard punk rock and my life changed forever...(TB)
(Social Bomb, Heckenstr 35/HH, 47058 Duisburg, GERMANY)

DEFECTOR – "Punk System Destroy" EP

Hell yes! Another fucking rampaging distorted romp of punk rock destructo-thrash from courtesy of our friends at Crust War Records. Snarling arse-ripping guitars like a fucking drill-bit to your anus matched up with a gut wrenching vocal attack that creates a cacaphony of noisy hardcore blasts that fans of FRAMTID, DISCLOSE, and American's ATROCIOUS MADNESS adore. Great, great, great! (MT)
(Crust War Overseas, PO Box 511, Whippany, NJ 07981-0511, **crustwaroverseas@earthlink.net**)

DEMINER – "Woes and So's" CD

This sounds like a slower FACE TO FACE to me. Which isn't a bad thing. Pop punk with emo overtones and decent melodies/vocals. A good full length.
(Johann's Face Records, PO Box 479164, Chicago, IL 60647, www.dmnr.com)

DEMONICS – "Dunebuggy Gang" EP

More of what you'd expect from both Gearhead and the DEMONICS: catchy tunes to drive your hotrod to on your way to the beach. Three tunes: the A-side is straight from their new LP, the B-side is one instro that left me snoring and one mid-tempo "groove" song. Yawn! This band has been turning out better-than-average records lately, but I see they have let their standards drop with this single. What a shame. (BM)
(Gearhead, PO Box 421219, San Francisco, CA 94142, wwww.gearheadrecords.com)

DIE YOUNG – "Songs for the Converted" EP

Fast metal hardcore that would be right at home on the Victory Records roster. Lyrics like "Hating you makes me whole" and "Fuck you, fuck me, fuck humanity" give you an idea of what this band is going for. My favorite song lyrically has to be the anti-religion track "The Renaissance". Not my thing, but fans of BURIED ALIVE and TERROR might want to check into this. (CC)
(United Edge, PO Box 342, Dalmeny, SK S0K1E0 CANADA)

DIOS HASTIO – "Morfologia Del Desastre" EP

Here it is, the final release from this Peruvian thrashing powerhouse—and what a way to go out. Ten tracks of ripping hardcore that echoes of the intensity of old Italian punk like NEGAZIONE or the WRETCHED, but with a definite modern edge that makes them immediately unique and recognizable. Fucking amazing. (MT)
(Bacteria, 2173 San Moritz Circle Apt. 303, Herndon, VA 20170, bakteriazz@yahoo.com)

DISCIPLINE – "Saints & Sinners" LP

Heavily influenced but miles better than the likes of AGNOSTIC FRONT, DISCIPLINE play great up-tempo tough street-punk with hardcore tendencies (I guess it's called "street-core"). I've noticed that the quality of the German stuff is improving and DISCIPLINE continues the trend. Well played with a lot of heart this is way better than anything their culturally devoid American counterparts are putting out. This is more along the lines of the good US street-punk groups than the knucklehead East Coast hardcore bands, think BONECRUSHER and Aussie rockers ROSE TATTOO. Skinhead punk rock with soul and steel toecaps. Great. (AD)
(Knock Out, Postfach 100716, 46527 Dinslaken, GERMANY)

DISCIPLINE – "Rejects Of Society" CD

A sort of "best of" from this street punk band from Holland. Anthemic punk with throaty vocals. Along the ways of DROPKICK MURPHYS and U.S. BOMBS musically. Great stuff from a band whose releases are finally getting some attention over here. (RL)
(Captain Oi)

DISCLOSE -"Neverending War" EP

More lo-fi brutality from Japan's most distorted disciples of DISCHARGE. I totally agree that DISCLOSE plays awesome D-beat-styled hardcore. It's fucking raw and astonishingly well executed, but after about ten minutes the dis-aster of a recording gets on my nerves. The sound quality is always intentionally really fucking shitty. The recording on this one might be better than say, the *No More Pain* LP, but not by much. If you can get past the bad recording, and for fans of DISCLOSE, this one is seriously worth picking up. (LG)
(Disclose, c/o Kawakami, 6825 murotomisaki-cho, Muroto-city, Kochi, 78I-710I, JAPAN)

THE DRAGONS - "Sin Salvation" LP

....oh boy, Gearhead....my all time favorite label....cuz when I think Frisco, I think Gearhead.....and when I'm sucking cock on Haight Street I think Gearhead too....cuz I'm into the lame-ass weak shit that Gearhead has to offer.....yes, I am a FAN!!! I also enjoy radio-friendly PUNK ROCK, MAN!!!!!!! I also like Fat Records and Epitaph too, but that's another story.....!!! I dig the DRAGONS for all the right reasons.....the heavy store-bought guitar sound.....the smell of cum on the record sleeve (kinda like Ajax)....the all-balls driving rock 'n' roll sound of young guns in heat.....that's my bag man.....!!!! Gearhead does it again!!! Another year of sure winners!!!!!! Eat 'em up kiddies, there's much more of this fluff to come.....(SW)
(Gearhead, PO Box 421219, San Francisco, Ca 94142, www.gearheadrecords.com)

DRAGSTRIP SYNDICATE – "Thank You, Goodnight" EP

This sounds a lot like the MOONEY SUZUKI. DRAGSTRIP SYNDICATE calls out "Oh yeah baby now" with the 70s style rock of the HELLACOPTERS driving behind it. If I didn't know any better, I'd guess these guys were from Sweden, but they're not. Yawn. I gotta say I'm tired of this sound…the MOONEY SUZUKI is doing Coors beer commercials these days. (AS)
(Demonbeach, PO Box 6693, Raleigh, NC 27626-6693, www.demonbeachrecords.com)

DRONGOS FOR EUROPE - "Wasted" EP

DRONGOS FOR EUROPE was formed in Birmingham, England in 1979. The band released two good singles in 1982, on the Inferno label. While this new material is not as strong as the older material, it still has punk credibility. Intimidation Records also offers good punk records by SWELLBELLYS, ASSERT, and ASSAILANTS. (BR)
(Intimidation, PO Box 14627, Leven, Fife, SCOTLAND KY8 2ZD, www.intimidationrecords.co.uk)

EARACHES – "Fist Fights, Hot Love" CD

What's with the kickass rock 'n' roll this month!? The EARACHES definitely have that MC5 thing going without sounding like a 70s time warp noodle machine. With tons of mediocre bands out there, it's refreshing to get a kick in the pants every once in a while. (DP)
(Steel Cage, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125, www.steelcagerecords.com)

EAT MY FUK – "Wet Slut & a Bottle of Whiskey" CD

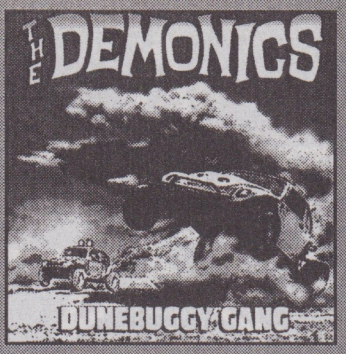
GG Allin was one of a kind. His first LP ruled; the rest was the ramblings of the deranged backed by plodding rock. This band is desperate to relive mid-period Geeg, but at least he had the decency to cover himself in shit and get beaten up by the audience. This band *sucks*. I mean really really sucks–taking the crown as being by far the worst thing I've ever reviewed (and I said that *last* month…in fact, this is the third month in a row I've had a CD with a cover of women beaten or raped on it). Repetitive plodding dirge with the most horrendous lyrics ever ("I Wanna Cum on You, Kneel Before My Cock," etc.) Call me an uptight PC commie—I don't see how being against songs glorifying raping and beating women is being "uptight." These guys are pathetic, their band sucks, and I bet their cocks are tiny. (TB)
(Bestial Onslaught)

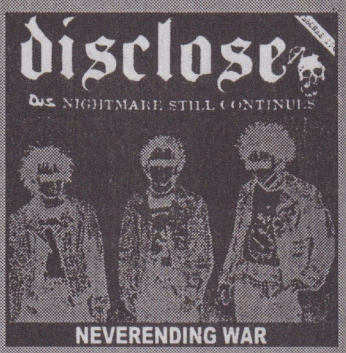
EL CAMINO 53 – "The Octopus Diary" EP

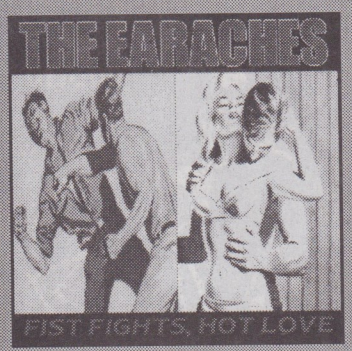
Interesting band name and record title. With that said let me just say that EL CAMINO 53 from Japan blast through six songs of thrashed out noisy hardcore. I can't really pinpoint the reason, but in the end I wasn't very impressed. Everything just came across sort of noisy and disjointed. It just didn't seem to gel together very well. Bummer. (RC)
(Answer, Hase Bld No. 2 B1 5-49 OSU3 Naka-Ku, Nagoya-City, Aichi 460 JAPAN)

THE ELEKTROCUTION – "Vagina Dentata" CDEP

With the cranked heavy 60s riffs and minimalist keyboards this six song EP flirts with the 60s garage rock and the 70s hard rock at the same time in a good way. They also flirt with macho themes like: "Trophy Girl", "Womanizer", and "Baby Bring Home The Bacon". Nothing that doesn't seem over the top. All in all a fine piece of wax… errr plastic. (HM)
(Troplain Vincent c/o Emergence, 29, rue le nostre 76000 Rouen FRANCE, www.emergencerecords.fr.st)







ERASE ERRATA - "Live at the Eagle Tavern" EP

This lovely picture disc features one of Oakland's finest recorded live, mic squeals, feedback, and all. I kinda wish that the in-between songs talk'n was a bit more clever, which is really the point of live recordings anyway. Head jerk'n like stop and go traffic on a bike, this record delivers what is expected. (MM)
(Lungcast, www.lungcast.com)

FATE TO HATE – "Iron Fist" CD

I was never a big fan of this style of NYHC. I am not saying that these guys don't do it well; it's just not my thing. There are a few street punk influenced songs on here that I really like. But a lot of the songs start off with what should be a breakdown but really is the verse, and then it breaks down into a series of even more breakdowns. By the time it gets to the *real* breakdown, everything is just too damn slow. So if you're looking to get your "molasses mosh" on, and you're a fan of later SICK OF IT ALL and late 80s AGNOSTIC FRONT, you should check out this Montreal based hardcore band. (CC)
(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St. W. Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2, CANADA)

FEAR OF GOD - "Born Blind" EP

Legitimate bootleg of this seminal Swiss noise-grind-hardcore outfit. Side A is the best, with a fairly even- sounding recording of (total audio destruction hate) a rehearsal from 1988, while side B brutally suffers from twelfth generation cassette hiss. Packaging includes a detailed discography, some lyrics, and an interview. I believe it's limited to 500 so you collectors better start jumping through those hoops. (WM)
(Absurd, CX Postal 302, Osasco / SP, 06016 -970, BRAZIL, absurd@brfree.com.br)

FEDERATION X - "X Patriot" LP

..... this record sucks my cock.....but not in a good way!!!! Steve Albini may have worked the knobs and made it all real loud and strong and produced sounding, but he already does that to everything he touches anyway.....in other words, there's only so much a master chef could do with a bowl of shit.....!!!! But kids like the taste of shit....and you should too!!!!! Keep the pressing plants going full steam.....we have a hungry new generation to feed.....(SW)
(Estrus, PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227)

FIGHTING CHANCE – "Thus Hope Fades" CD

I don't believe that every band should be out there forcing political views down my throat, but I am encouraged when a band comes from a genre (street punk/oi) which seems to have fewer and fewer overtly left wing bands with a direct and strong political agenda. FIGHTING CHANCE, from Canada, play upbeat oi with tough vocals and shouted backups. Musically, it's decent, if a little one-dimensional, but lyrically this band shines, tackling CIA-trained deathsquads, US foreign policy, racism, and the like. Going for well thought-out, researched lyrics rather than lefty rants, this CD really is worth tracking down if you're into oi and you have more than fresh air between your ears. (TB)
(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St. W. Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2, CANADA)

FINAL BLOODBATH – "Nothing of Reality" EP

More total DISCHARGE worship from these Japanese punks that is so dead-on that this really could be confused with some sort of long-lost DISCHARGE demo tape from like '81. Seriously, everything from the song structures, the guitar tone, the drumming, the vocal attack—fuck me, it's amazing. Who needs the washed-up DISCHARGE reunion tour that's rumored to hit the USA this fall, when you have the likes of FINAL BLOODBATH? (MT)
(Paanklevyt, 1-4-9 TAS201, Hatanaka, Niiza, Saitama, 352-0012, JAPAN, **paanklevyt@aol.com**)

FIYA – "Recede" EP

Hailing from Gainesville, FIYA is obviously on the darker side of things then many of their regional counterparts. The songs on this EP are pretty short and usually move from a lengthy section of mid-tempo bump and rumble, like 12 HOUR TURN mixed with a lesser BORN AGAINST, to the occasional more straightforward, fast-paced bits with more of a skate-punk feel. My only complaint with this record is that I almost desperately want something more to happen—that clenching hook or memorable line, or just a bit more power behind what we have here. The songs rock hard, but it seems like FIYA hasn't really hit full stride yet. A solid debut EP either way and I look forward to future releases. (SP)
(Obscurist Press, PO Box 13077, Gainesville, FL 32604, obscurist@hotmail.com)

THE FLAMING SIDEBURNS - "Blow the Roof/Bam-A-Lama Lu"

.....well, these guys know how to play, but this kinda shit is soooooo trendy now it's painful....you all know what I'm talking about....that Euro-hard rock trip.....the yanks are just as guilty, I know....but the Euro's are the ones that are in the spot light.....it seems as if everybody has the smell of the MC5's cum on their breath these days....but worry not.....it will pass in time.....Michael Monroe from HANOI ROCKS is doing the harmonica action on the B-side.....if that helps.... (SW)
(Safty Pin, PO Box 51241, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN, www.arrakis.es/-safetypin)

THE FLIPTOPS- "Secrets & Lies" EP

In the same way that MURDER CITY DEVILS seemed to charm rock and rusty crooning into the ground, the FLIPTOPS rock their stuff. However, they've got the smiling and having a good time thing going rather than the tragic you ditched me for a truck driver face. Kinda like veggie corndogs, when you were expecting top ramen. (MM)
(Vinyl Warning, PO Box 2991 Portland, OR 97208)

FOUR SQUARE – "Three Chords…One Capo" CD

It's about time someone gave credit to the average guitar player's best friend "The Capo". (Insert Segue) But these guys are far from average! Great punk pop from SWEDEN. This reminds me of the STEREO and ARMCHAIR MARTIAN. There is something working right on the melodic front here. A great full length! (RL)
(Bad Taste Records, www.badtasterecords.se)

FOURTEEN YEAR OLD GIRLS – "Zombies in Robots Out" CD

You know, I was all set to write a particularly scathing review of this simplistic new wave quartet, but damned if there isn't something kind of endearing about a band that aspires to little more than being the soundtrack to your video gaming experience. I could definitely see SPAM Records putting out something like this, seeing as it's got some of the male/female BLAST ROCKS cuteness. The real clincher here, though, was the brilliant, Mortal Kombat-inspired song title "Rayden on Prom Night." Puns don't get much better than that, my dears: you can say it, and only people who have played the game *and* seen *Grease* will know what the fuck you're talking about. (MX)
(Retard Disco, PO Box 461163, Los Angeles, CA 90046, www.retarddisco.com)

FREE VERSE- "Inventing an Archetype" CD

Following in the footsteps of other amazing Seattle bands like SEVEN YEAR BITCH, this band is truly amazing, and this new release proves my point. (MM)
(Demirep, PO Box 85364 Seattle, WA 98145)

FUCKED UP – "Police / Municipal Prick"

Another smoking release from these Canadian punks, which brings to mind the ferocity of *Feel the Darkness*-era POISON IDEA. A perfect melding of hardcore's intensity with massive rock riffing. Fucking huge guitars and drums on this one, with tough-ass lyrics in the "we're the fucking punks and we're not going to take your fucking shit anymore sot of way" that are an all-out assault on the boys in blue and Toronto's finest slimeball city officials. A modern classic, that is simply and purely devastating. (MT)
(Deranged, PO Box 543, Station P, Toronto, CANADA)

THE FUNERAL – "Ruled by None" CD

FUNERAL play tough-as-nails, angst-filled 90s style hardcore, pounding out 12 songs in 22 minutes. Their vague socio-political lyrics are surprisingly well written compared to what usually comes along with this kind of stuff. The way I see it, Victory Records was good for one thing—to point out as blatantly as possible how ridiculous the macho hardcore thing has gotten, and that it's time to throw in the towel. But don't let me stop you from putting on those Nikes and moshing it up. (VH)
(Endwell, 19 Stori Rd, Newburgh, NY 12550)

A GLOBAL THREAT - "Earache" EP

Rodent Popsicle has yet another triumph with the new six-song A GLOBAL THREAT EP! The singing is urgent, the guitars churn happily, and the bass player and drummer punctuate the thing damn accurately. "Social Quarantine" is one of the best A GLOBAL THREAT songs of recent memory—and these guys are mighty prolific! A GLOBAL THREAT set the standards high years ago and they've stuck to them! Get this record! (BR)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143. Allston , MA 02134, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

GOOD RIDDANCE – "Bound by Ties of Blood and Affection" LP

Fat Wreck Chords seems to be in the midst of a renaissance of sorts, with rash of recent signings such as D4 (not *the* D4, asshole), LAWRENCE ARMS, RISE AGAINST, NONE MORE BLACK, and AGAINST ME, that effectively give the label a roster of bands with whom you cannot fuck. The face of Fat has totally changed for me in the short year in which I've been reviewing records, but we are still inevitably left with the holdover bands. Now, we all know LAGWAGON and STRUNG OUT blow (thank the fucking lord I don't have to review their double live album), but I'm here to urge you to not write off GOOD RIDDANCE as you might the other two. While I could easily say that this is just watered down melodic hardcore played by people too unwilling to let go of the BLINK 182 tendencies and just turn into KID DYNAMITE, I can feel the urgency more than I had originally predicted. Granted, this record doesn't quite rock the Casbah, but there's a few really great songs that make it better than a kick in the pants…or a STRUNG OUT boxed set. (MX)
(Fat, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690, www.fatwreck.com)

GOUKA – "12345 Chaos" EP

Partners In Crime has quickly become one of those labels that seems to nail it with every record they put out. And this GOUKA record is no exception. It looks like GOUKA is a 4-piece now, but their sound remains the same. This is killer crustcore that attacks like a hammering wall of thunder. Pounding drums, buzzing guitar, thumping bass, throat crushing vocals...it is all here and it all rocks! (RC)
(Partners In Crime, 6250 NE 6th Ave., Portland, OR 97211)

GOVERNMENT ISSUE – "Strange Wine: Live at CBGB's" CD

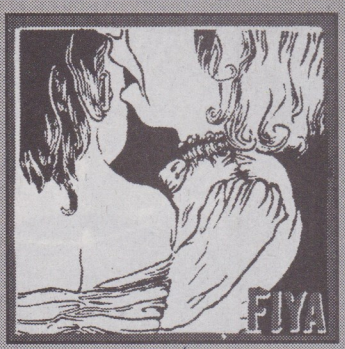
Recorded in '87 (by which point I think they'd already disembarked from their hardcore roots in favor of some kind of DOORS thing) and released mainly to escape from a contract, *Strange Wine* has good sound quality, contains 25 tracks of old and newer material, and ends on a version of FAITH's "Trapped". Dr. Strange has now re-released all of G.I.'s back catalogue, and I think that would be a better place for people to start. (AD)
(Dr. Strange, PO Box 1058, Alto Loma, CA 90701)

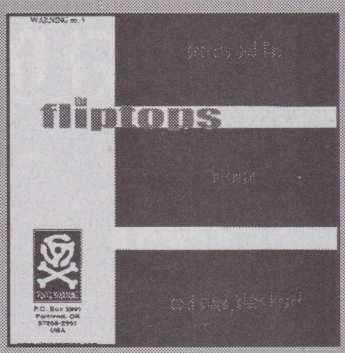
GREYFIELD – "Soundtrack to the Summer" CD

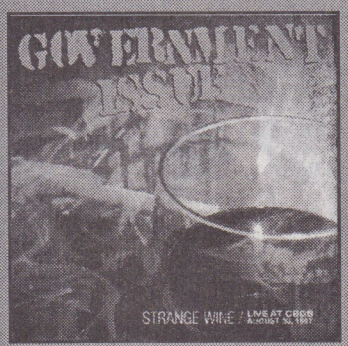
Christ, the guitar on this record sounds amazing. It's equal parts soft and crisp, and I just love it. Too Bad the songs suck monkey balls. Picture SIMPLE PLAN (if you don't know them, you're better off, trust me) with a slightly snottier vocalist. I give this points because one of the members is wearing fucking flip-flops in the band photo on the back cover, which is pretty raw, but that's the only way you're getting any freaking points. Search past MTV next time and see what comes out. (MX)
(Search and Rescue, PO Box 8260, Ann Arbor, MI 48107, www.searchandrescuerecords.com)

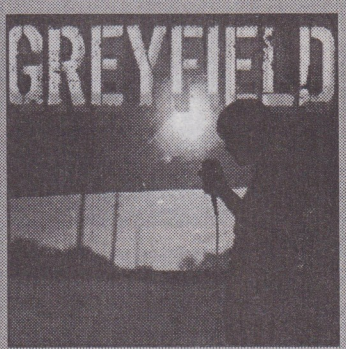
HANDS OF DEATH – "Whoremonger" CD

Well, I was pretty nervous with the DANZIG-style rock 'n' roll intro to the first song, but at about a minute in they fortunately shifted pace. It was quickly replaced with some aggressive metal hardcore that









goes from thumping breakdowns to fast thrashing metal and is packed with lots of tempo changes. The guy's vocals are pretty brutal with a super harsh scream, but there are no lyrics in the insert to accompany his yelling. And I am not sure what the heck was going on with that "hidden track," but I have to ask what the point was of putting verbal mish-mash on there. This was all right, but nothing mind-blowing. (RC)
(Contempt For Humanity; ccwg666@hotmail.com)

THE HEADFALL ATTITUDES / HELLROUTE 16 – split EP

I really didn't think I was going to like this one, based on the pic sleeve alone. The HEADFALL ATTITUDES remind me of early DESCENDENTS. I don't recall ever having said that about a band. I think it's the vocals—very Milo-ish. This is pretty good shit. Three bald fucks, two wearing creepers and one wearing a GUNS 'N' ROSES t-shirt, that sound like the DESCENDENTS. How cool is that? HELLROUTE 16 has a couple of fat guys; I know I'm not going to like them. I don't hate them, but they use a harmonica, so it almost came to that. It's OK punk 'n' roll with some decent SAINTS-like guitar work, but it won't have any problem flying under the radar. Still the HEADFALL ATTITUDES stuff makes the record worthwhile. (KK)
(Rocking Retard, c/o Simon Raun, Møllegade 15, 2.th, 2200 Copenhagen N., DENMARK)

HEATSEEKERS – "In Praise of..." CD

Well, what do we have here? A nifty little co-ed four-piece from Florida featuring Chuck Loose on drums. This falls into the Just Add Water kind of sound, with one foot in the SUPERSUCKERS/sideburns movement. Not bad, but nothing I'd put on every day. Only for those times, few and far between, when I'm almost in the mood for Gearhead but not quite. (BM)
(Ohev, PO Box 772121, Coral Springs, FL 33077, www.ohevrecords.com)

HELEN KELLER – "Rats! (With Cocks This Long)" 2xEP

Slickly produced art-damaged punkish rawk with synth frosting from 1978 releases by a Northwest studio band (at least, so I am told). The non-stop guitar wanking makes "Mein Death Kamph Shuffle" kind of hard to endure. I think I remember "Surfin' (With Steve And Idi Amin)" from Dr. Demento, but maybe that's just because it's the obvious hit of the package. Steve Green's kind of music! (because it mentions Idi Amin) (DD)
(Deaf Ear, PO Box 47051, Seattle WA, 98146)

HELLSIDE STRANGLERS – "Love You to Death" CD

In a genre that is becoming invaded with shit, here comes a band that makes wading through it worthwhile. This is tough as fuck rock 'n' roll in the style of the HELLACOPTERS, et al. The mix is impeccable. You can feel the kick in your gut as you turn the knob to 11. (DP)
(National Dust, PO Box 2454, Portland, OR 97208, nationaldust@hotmail.com)

HELL'S KITCHEN – "Fistful of Chicken" LP

Originally recorded (released?) in 1990, the Germans saved this disc from relative obscurity. These Bay Area metal heads deliver some predictable, catchy, nostalgic old school metal riddled with plenty of metal humor. Wow, this really sounds dated. Cool. (HM)
(Weird System, Alstertweite 32, 2000 Hamburg 1, W. GERMANY)

HELLSUCKERS – "Tonite Destruction" CD

I really wanted to hate this band. The package is just so ridiculously, overtly Satanic. There's the pentagram on the cover, then the "Omen" music intro. All that's missing is a sacrificed baby corpse. Nonetheless, this band fucking rocks. From the AC/DC "For Those About to Rock"-like beginning, to the cover of T-REX'S "20th Century Boy," this is a solid wall of rock 'n' roll that will leave you limp and panting. Get it. (DP)
(Thunderbird Music, 3, rue Rochechouard, 67610 la Wantzenau, FRANCE)

HIPBONE SLIM AND THE KNEE-TREMBLERS – "Snake Pit" CD

Straightforward rockabilly from the man formerly known as SIR BALD DIDDLEY, now going by the moniker HIPBONE SLIM. This has a very authentic 50s feel. It's as if I'm at a school dance and I'm going steady. It's nice, but I want my music to be much more trashy. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm, Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, SWITZERLAND)

HOBO SOUNDS/THEE JENERATORS – split EP

The HOBO SOUNDS are a melodic and/or heartfelt combo in a sorta later ANGELIC UPSTARTS vein...and who turn in "Hang the President (He'd Do the Same for You"). THEE JENERATORS are sorta rockier and more *punk,* if you will. Neither track here gives me a real feel for the bands or what they're capable of: sort of feels like reading a one-sentence personal ad. (JH)
(Twist, www.cionlne.com/twist)

HOT CROSS – "Cryonics" LP

People just can't seem to get over the whole "ex-members" thing these days, but in all honesty, it is sort of pertinent information considering the band's sound is essentially a sum of its parts—SAETIA, YOU AND I, OFF MINOR, etc. I reviewed the HOT CROSS 10" about a year ago and was thoroughly impressed with the depth and breadth of the EP and more importantly, the amount of urgency behind the material. Truly a stellar release. With this record, though, it seems like HOT CROSS took a lot more time in making *a record,* if you catch my drift. There is a lot more expansion, a lot more exploration, and overall, it seems a much more serious endeavor. Take that how you will, but to me it seems that some of the urgency that I mentioned before seems lost in the refinement of the record's musical elements: the off-kilter guitar wanking and noodling; the countless tempo changes and odd time signatures; and the occasional over-the-top GET UP KIDS-esque vocal (where did that come from?) With more emphasis on these elements, I feel like some of HOT CROSS' raw energy is muffled and contained when it should have been amplified and pushed. Granted, this is all debatable—the LP *does* have some truly killer moments—and in doing this review I'm almost revisiting a debate I had with a friend recently over what one should value more in a record: "musicianship," or some rough sense of urgency. Obviously a median option yields the best results, but as this record pushes HOT CROSS further

in the direction of the earlier, I can't help but look on with just a pinch of disappointment. (SP)
(Level Plane, PO Box 4329, Philadelphia, PA 19118, www.level-plane.com)

THE HOT FLASHEZ – "Hot and Bothered" CD

Uh oh…horns. Landing somewhere between ska-core and ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT comes the HOT FLASHEZ. With no information on this, I'm not sure what to base any assumptions on, but it is not bad. Very lively upbeat rock with brass and smart-assed lyrics. I'll take back the ska-core thing—they're a lot better than that. This is very well played and produced, and has an obvious potential for commercial success. I wouldn't be surprised if this wasn't the last I heard from them. It's not really my particular punk rock cup of tea, but I like this nonetheless. (AD)
(Duffmeister)

HOTWIRES – "Ignition" CD

The HOTWIRES: I've heard of 'em. British. Stylish. Advance warning suggested a CRIME influence at play (in light of the band name, an overt reference to "Hot Wire My Heart"). I'm hearing a lot of other sounds at work, all struggling furiously for a handhold. I dig 'em. They actually remind me of English fop-punkers the RAPED, with their desperate yelps and compressed guitar chug. The band are filling a definite gap that has existed since the heyday of the SICK THINGS: tough kids all around. (JH)
(Artrocker, www.artrocker.com)

HUMAN WASTE - "I Vantan Pa Social Bidraget" EP

Every once and a while I get a record that is just so bad that I play it at 45 instead of 33, trying to convince myself that it can't possibly be as bad as it sounds. It *must* have been mislabeled...Nine times out of ten, it really is a 33 RPM, and yes, it is that awful. This record is that one exception. This is the fifth EP from these Swedes, and they haven't let up one bit, ripping through five tracks of fast, raw, harsh hardcore. (VH)
(New Noise, Box 55, 8332 21 Froson, SWEDEN, www.newnoiserec.cjb.net)

I FARM - "I Farm is Lying to Be Popular" CD

Do I own my bike or does it own me? Am I more stupid because I expect my computer to tell me how to feel or what to think? Maybe. TV sucks, like leftover veggie corndogs. Don't cause yourself any more pain. Even though blast beats aren't really my thing, this record is good stuff, like chocolate soymilk. (MM)
(Go Kart, PO Box 20 Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012)

INHUMANE NATURE - "The Demonstration" EP

Socio-political hardcore, replete with photos of cops in riot gear and a monkey being subjected to vivisection, with a poetic but troubled heart, as evidenced by the lyrics of personal struggles against the social machines that codify and destroy the soul. Fans of BORN AGAINST would be into these Riverside, Californians, melodic-vocaled hardcore—they include a cover of BORN AGAINST's "Mary and Child." (WM)
(New Eden, PO Box 11055, Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

INVISIBLE MAN'S DEATH BED - EP

Was there some fuck-up at the pressing plant? Looking at this sleeve, with the guy screaming on the cover and all the Japanese text, I swear I expected some thrash to come blasting out of the speakers. Instead it's very, very poppy, emotional indie rock. I hesitate to even call the A-side rock, except it gets louder and more guitar-oriented towards the end. The B-side is faster-paced and has interesting guitar work. Catchy too. Still total indie rock, though. The Japanese vocals are peppered with Dave Smalley-style "passion squeaks," which I could definitely have done without. Weird release. (AM)
(Blitz Pia, www.blitz-pia.com)

IO – "The Willow Snag" CD

IO is an anomaly, dynamic and interesting. From Pittsburgh, IO plays a random chaotic melding of hard rock, metal, experimental, emo, and old school 80s hardcore, with dueling male voices in tortured violent screams. The songs contain everything from heavy tribal rhythms, grinding guitars, and harmonious melodies, to slowly interchanging almost evil psychedelic breakdowns. It's an emotionally blurring wall of sound. Powerful, driven, and unique, I'd totally recommend IO to someone who is looking for something assaulting but a little outside the standard recipe for hardcore. (LG)
(Hope, PO Box 71154 Pittsburgh, PA 15213)

IRISH CAR BOMB – "Tacos and Pornos" CD

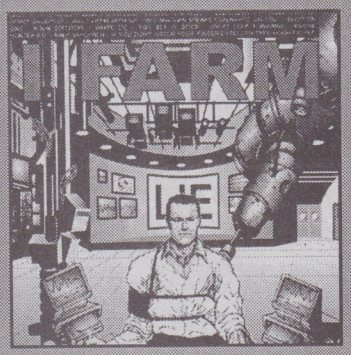
Thirteen tracks of muscular tough-guy hardcore. The majority of the tracks feature the typical gravel throat on vocals, capturing that latter-day AGNOSTIC FRONT sound. They do throw in a few more melodic NO USE FOR A NAME-esque numbers, with the tuneful guy singing. All are carried off pretty well. (RK)
(Purple Skunk,www.purpleskunkrecords.com)

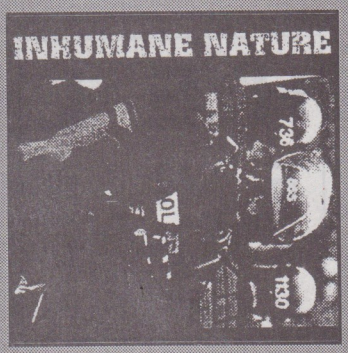
JACKIE - "Goes Electric / Stars Brought Low"

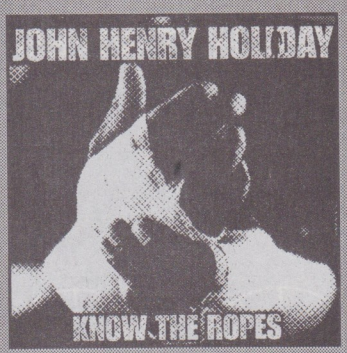
New wave rock 'n' roll in the vein of TELEVISION, ELVIS COSTELLO, maybe even JONATHAN RICHMAN. "Stars Brought Low" sounds a little like MOBY's "We Are All Made of Stars." Two good catchy songs. If I heard either of these on the radio as I was driving around I'd be pretty stoked. (AM)
(Glare, PO Box 82728, Portland, OR 97282, glarerecords@hotmail.com)

JOHN HENRY HOLIDAY – "Know the Ropes" EP

This was recorded over three years ago, so I am not sure that this band is even still together. This features Dan O'Mahony on vocals, and sounds like almost every other band he has been in: a drill instructor barking out jogging chants over fast hardcore. Lyrics seem to be on the very jaded tip. Lines like "So shut your fucking lip/You've lived about half my life" rubbed me the wrong way. That sounds like something someone's dad would say. This is not as good as NO FOR AN ANSWER, but better than SPEAK. (CC)
(Livewire, PO Box 007, Mendham NJ, 07945)







JOHN WAYNE'S SEVERED HEAD – "The Media Controls..." CD

Band names like "JOHN WAYNE'S SEVERED HEAD" sound good for about two seconds, tops. When they make it to print on nine-song CDs it's usually a really bad sign. But except for the occasions where duder actually tries to sing, there really isn't that much to complain about. It's fast, raw, melodic hardcore. (VH)
(www.jswh.org)

THE K-10 PROSPECT – CD

I'm pretty sure that when I saw K-10 PROSPECT, they were a one-man acoustic dealie. Anyhow, this 4 song EP is all over the place. It reminds me of bands like DE LA HOYA and DBS, but with a lot more metal riffing which really sets this apart. It keeps me interested all throughout the CD. Overall, it's quite similar to Philidelphia's the GREAT CLEARING OFF, a band that I really like. They do punk rock well with a lot of energy and a mixture of political and emotionally based lyrics. (WR)
($5 ppd; Nessa, 3375 North Russell Road, Bloomington, IN 47408)

THE KICKS – CD

A good punky pop record that falls in-between WEEZER and GREEN DAY. In fact, one of these guys is the additional guitarist in GREEN DAY. Maybe this is a supergroup and I'm outta touch. You can only spend so much time Googling people for a review. Anyways this is very pop and pretty good material wise. Recommended for pure pop fans. (RL)
(XS Records, www.thekicks.net)

KILLING FLAME – "The Dream Dies" EP

The KILLING FLAME serve up a yellow vinyl platter of fast hardcore with barked vocals mixed in with some purty singin'. In the breakdowns, where you'd expect some metal riffing, they brew in some quite odd melodic, almost emo-tinged guitar noodling. If you're in the mood for outlandish comparisons, picture the FOO FIGHTERS playing youth crew and you'll have a pretty good approximation of this EP. It held my interest, and should hold yours too. (MX)
(Live Wire, PO Box 239 Seal Beach, CA 90740-0239, www.livewire-records.com)

THE KNOCKOUT PILLS – "Reject Button" LP

The KNOCKOUT PILLS start off with plenty of gusto and verve. Solid power pop that'll knock yer socks off. Get it NOW! (HM)
(Deadbeat, PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078, www.dead-beat-records.com, www.knockoutpills.com)

LAYBACKS – "Beer" EP

What an awesome EP. The songs are catchy as hell, sweet but rough, JAWBREAKER-paced but with a little more pogo. Cut-and-paste punk that speaks of a living room scene in Finland where the hand-poked tattoo crowd can hug/mosh, grin, and drink beer. Like scenes of this ilk all over the world, this one seems to be pretty self-contained—they forget the country name on the record, so I hope I'm right about Finland! They sing about beer, obviously, but also human troubles, human rights, and keeping it real, in six great tracks. (AC)
(Roku, Poroelontie 1a3, 96100 Rovaniemi, FINLAND)

LET IT BURN - "Hello Good Friend" EP

The title track is a powerful combination of hardcore energy with a thick yet melodic guitar sound, reminiscent of Brian Baker's stronger DAG NASTY work, or maybe LEATHERFACE/HDQ. The songs on the flip have less to make them stand out, even though one is a BOWIE cover, but on the whole the record works. (AM)
(Coalition, Newtonstraat 212, 2562KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS; www.coalitionrecords.com)

LET IT BURN – "Hello Good Friend" CD

Same as the vinyl version reviewed here, but with some extra tracks, this is a collection put together from comps and split 7"s. While LET IT BURN would fit snugly betwixt KID DYNAMITE and THE EXPLOSION genre-wise, with their ripping, high energy melodic hardcore, they have a little something extra. Maybe it's their quirky ROLLING STONES and BOWIE covers, or maybe it's the pop art sleeve artwork and slightly off-kilter songwriting, but I find these fellas much more satisfying than the aforementioned. In Mike Thorn terms, that's the difference between a Taco Bell rice and bean burrito and a fat super veggie from our favorite Mission Street taqueria. (TB)
(Alone, PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126)

THE LETTERS ORGANIZE – "Everybody Goes Yeah! Bash..." CD

I've got to be honest, I don't really like this kind of screamo hardcore, so it's kind of hard for me to give it as fair a review as someone who is into this kind of music. Intense screamy emo hardcore with slow, interjecting jammy rock madness. (LG)
(www.thelettersorganize.com)

LIGHT THE FUSE AND RUN / TRANSISTOR TRANSISTOR – split LP

Here we have a neat little split LP (people should really do more of these...see my rant about the ten inch in the last issue) by two screamo up-and-comers. LIGHT THE FUSE AND RUN pack in more of the meaty crunch of REFUSED than I've heard on their previous releases, but they haven't gone and done the whole electronica thing, and they keep things more melodic for those of you who thought REFUSED sounded like a rap-metal band. The vocals tend more towards yelling than screaming, which is always good, and the production is excellent. TRANSISTOR TRANSISTOR do the alternating singing/screaming thing with much less urgency and ferocity, and everything sounds kind of thin. There's none of the fucking pulverizing guitars that the A-side of this split had me expecting, and they incorporate keyboards that drone and get pretty annoying. Overall, a good, solid release, but LIGHT THE FUSE AND RUN is the real treasure. (MX)
(Level Plane, PO Box 4329, Philadelphia, PA 19118, www.level-plane.com)

LITTLE LEAGUE – "The Kill Verona EP" CD

Emo-core, very clean cut and a little too contrived for me. There's not a month goes by without me getting one of these to review. It has to be done extremely well for me to be even the slightest bit interested, and this is not. It's emotional, but lacking any real emotion and imagination. I don't consider this punk, or even rock 'n' roll, for that matter. Not bad, just not good. (AD)
(Livewire, PO Box 007, Mendham, NJ 07945)

LOS RETARDOS – "At the Club" EP

As much as I try, I just can't get into this record. It has annoying one-string leads in every song, the vocals are very flat and uninspiring, and the mix is off. The songwriting is good, straightforward punk with good catchy chord progressions, but as a package, this is lacking. (DP)
(Fonz, Mollegade 15, 2.th.-2200, Copenhagen, N. DENMARK, rockingretard@hotmail.com, www.head-fall.com/losretardos)

LOST SOUNDS – "Demos Vol. 2" CD

This is the best stuff I've heard from these folks. Stripped down under-produced new wave and punk with keyboards. Just the right amount of art and melody. Could've been on Stiff or Rough Trade back in the early day. DEVO, TUXEDO MOON, or the SCREAMERS done now. Great! (RL)
(On/On Switch, PO Box 641122, San Francisco, CA 94164-1122, USA www.ononswitch.com)

MAD PARADE – "Bombs and the Bible" CD

MAD PARADE epitomized the whole 80s beach punk sound, along with bands like the CROWD, with bleached blonde hair, eye makeup, and super catchy melodic punk. I love their earlier gear and still spin their discs on a sunny afternoon. I was dreading this. I don't have time for all these old farts rehashing their sounding and releasing, plodding, lackluster records twenty years after their heyday. I'll admit it—I've been proved wrong—this disc is awesome. It's faster, punchier, and catchier than their old stuff, but still retaining the melody. They even pull off an amazing version of the BOOMTOWN RATS's "I Don't Like Mondays." If you're down with the whole current LA beach punk of SMOGTOWN and the STITCHES, you'd do well to get this, as the oldies prove they do it better (for once!) (TB)
(Dr. Strange, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

THE MAGGOTS - "Lets Go In 69 / 50 Gallon Bladder"

More Swedish garage punk from the country that shows no sign of giving us all a break. Look what you started, ABBA, look what you bloody started... The MAGGOTS, like an impressive list of fellow countrymen, take on the 60s punk stylings—shouting, shimmying, and rocking in all the right tickly places. With the dirty go-go gusto of the PRISONERS and the contagious swagger of the MIGHTY CAESARS, who could fail to be impressed? The B-side shows that even a dodgy dose of psychobilly ain't too tricky for these boys to handle—right up that greasy pole with the TALL BOYS, early METEORS and vintage MAD DADDIES. A Gearhead record I like—must be a first. (SD)
(Gearhead, PO Box 421219, San Francisco, CA 94142 www.gearheadrecords.com)

MAN ALIVE / USELESS I.D. – split EP

With the production kicked up few notches, USELESS I.D. could fit into the whole GOOD CHARLOTTE crowd, but they make things much more interesting. Look for their split CD with current major label signees the ATARIS on Kung Fu for a clearer picture. MAN ALIVE work the BLINK 182 angle, with a little Midwest U.S.A. influence. All in all, this EP stands as a solid presentation of Israel's contribution to the global circus that is melodic punk. (MX)
(Dying is Deadly, PO Box 1581, Boise, ID 83701-1581, www.dyingdeadly.com)

MARKED MEN – LP

From the ashes of the REDS comes a new band—a better band. Fusing the lo-fi hit-'em-fast tactics these Texans were notorious for with an newly found pop appreciation, the MARKED MEN have made it clear that everything Rip Off puts out doesn't all sound the same. Thirteen tracks, none of which even reach the two and a half minute mark, that hit the RAYDIOS side of power pop (*i.e.* it's catchy but it ain't sweet) and god bless 'em for that. It's catchier than anything else Rip Off has put out in I don't know how long, they feature three ex-REDS—what more do you need to know? Go get this. Right now. (BM)
(Rip Off, 581 Maple Ave, San Bruno, CA 94066, www.ripoffrecords.org)

MATT & THE CASTRONAUGHTS – "This Ain't No Bay of Pigs, Momma!" CD

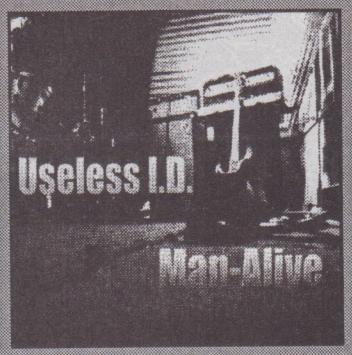
With the mustaches, cylinder hats, and cigars, the photo of this band led me to believe this would be maybe about the time warp in Cuba because of the economic embargo. Well, no such luck. This is good, though. Garagey with a tough edge, but other than the name and photo, no references to Cuba. I'm confused. (DP)
(513 N. Walnut St, Columbis City, IN 46725, www.youregoingup.com)

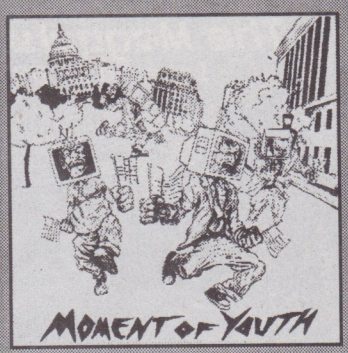
MEA CULPA - "They Put You In a Mask" LP

This rock 'n' power chord record will have you shaking your fist along with MEA CULPA's politics—lots of rad anti-war lyrics. Sometimes this band will fool you into thinking they sound like the CLASH, but don't forget they also have a song named "Rebel Girl" like BIKINI KILL. (MM)
(Empty, PO Box 12034 Seattle, WA 98012)

MELEE / FACE UP TO IT - split EP

Two bands that appeared on the *Destroy All Borders* compilation together. From France, FACE UP TO IT plays six songs of straightforward, fast, energetic hardcore with a heavy melodic pop element to it. MELEE delivers three new tracks of fast, muddy hardcore. I can't figure out what it is, but this band just doesn't do it for me. The singer's voice makes me think of Lemmy from MOTÖRHEAD trying to hail a cab after getting his teeth knocked out... (VH)
(Ratbone c/o Luc Ardilouze, B.P. 11, 33023 Bordeaux Cedex, FRANCE)





MENSEN – "Oslo City" LP

Here's the thing about MENSEN; they are extremely hot. They have to be, because they are three chicks (and your token male) that play punk rock. And this isn't gimmick rock or "look at me and how hot I am" rock—this is badass punk rock that stands on its own, which is exactly what makes them hot. The fact that they are Scandinavian only adds to the hotness factor. I studied Norwegian for a quick minute while I was in college—you're supposed to be impressed—and I have one thing to say to MENSEN: Jeg har en stor pik. Just in case you're wondering about the record, it is catchy, there are lots of guitars, there's something very compelling about the vocals, and, while it is punk rock, they have created a sound of their own. There's a little VICE SQUAD in there, but only a tad. And there's some early Subway pop, like the FLATMATES. This rocks and you should go out of your way to get it. (KK)
(Gearhead, PO Box 421219, San Francisco, CA 94142, www.gearheadrecords.com)

MICO – "Outside the Unbearable Grows" CD

I can't tell if I'm just projecting a WEAKERTHANS comparison onto this band because they are a political power pop band on G7. I guess, considering all that, it's justified to use Samson and the boys as a reference point. From there, add a foundation in modern radio-emo, some REM jangle and a few drum loops here and there, and you've got it. The lyrics sound supremely dumb when held up against John K.'s literary wit, but, in a pinch, this will do. I'm still waiting for the day when I get to use phrases like "ripping guitar attack" and "total thrashing mayhem" in my reviews, but sadly none yet have lived up to such a description. Oh well. (MX)
(G7 Welcoming Committee, PO Box 27006, 360 Main Street Concourse, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4T3, CANADA, www.g7welcomingcommittee.com)

THE MISTREATERS – "Playa Hated to the Fullest" LP

Once again, I'm reminded of old flickering neon beer signs, cigarette butts, and dive bars. Just listening to this record is making my shirt stink like a long night at the bar. Stripped down, straightforward, Estrus sleaze rock, from the streets of the beer city—Milwaukee. Gritty shit, recorded with the help Jim Diamond of Ghetto Studios in Detroit. Can't go wrong with that. (AS)
(Estrus, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227, www.estrus.com)

THE MISTREATERS "Hard on the Eyes / Who Wants Knives"

I have a friend who tells me he buys anything on Yakisakana. He loves the label and I do too. Now on release number eleven, they haven't missed. Of course, being the MISTREATERS, this is a no-brainer. One song from the fantastic new album *Playa Hated To Tha Fullest* and another that is an amazing conglomeration of feedback, screeching, and pounding drums. It is so muddy, but still so catchy. Who could imagine there would be this kind of urgency in a simple question like "Who wants knives?" I'll have one. This is great. (CK)
(Yakisakana, 51 rue Renaudel, 76 100 Rouen, FRANCE, ronan.yakisakana@wandoo.fr)

MOMENT OF YOUTH – "Self Titled" EP

MOMENT OF YOUTH plays awesome early 80s East Coast/DC-styled hardcore akin to YOUTH BRIGADE or TEEN IDLES. Seven fast and enraging songs about being young and standing up for what you believe in. Sounds tight, and it's totally vicious. I bet these guys totally rip live. (LG)
(Parts Unknown, PO Box 4835 Toms River, NJ 08754)

THE MONROES – "Razorback" EP

The MONROES explore repetitive grooves and lyrics making most of this EP a challenge to enjoy. They break the mold on the forth and final tune with a short, upbeat country number that saves the disc. (HM)
(Speed Nebraska, PO Box 3103, Omaha, NE 68103)

MOTARDS – "Stardom – 22 Rare & Unreleased Songs" CD

Nice, nice. The MOTARDS and I crossed paths on the best possible terms back in the sunlit days of 1993, when life was but a dream and death loomed far past the horizon…their self-titled debut EP was one of roughest and toughest "punk rock" asskicks I'd heard all that year. "I'm a Criminal" and "My Love is Bad" were textbook examples of the kinda mean-spirited 1-2 1-2 noise that always floats my canoe. Sadly, I lost track of the band after their subsequent singles and full-length hit the shelves (blame me). Eventually they moved on to other things. *Stardom* makes it all sound and feel like yesterday. You got 22 tracks that date from late '93 to mid '94, all of 'em real stompers. The first single's on here, in case you wanna catch up on what you missed. Perfect listening from start to finish. (JH)
(Mortville, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX 78765, www.mortvillerecords.com)

MOURNINGSIDE – "Some Secrets Are Better Left…" CD

Quick paced and upbeat punk, hardcore, street punk, and horror rock. These guys are from Boston and work in the dark of night, writing lyrics about death and killing and all other things horrific. They say that "MOURNINGSIDE is: helping the Moon Indians defeat the Space Nazis." It's not bad, not bad at all, but is it essential? (WM)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

MUCH THE SAME – "Quitters Never Win" CD

In one Calvin & Hobbes strip, Calvin receives a barfing face sticker on his test. Boy, if they really made those I'd slap one right across this CD's ugly face. Imagine if the condom broke while 88 FINGERS LOUIE and BAD RELIGION were having sex, and the resulting child's birth defects consisted of chugging, riff-based breakdowns with some half-assed screaming over it. Color me offended and, worst of all, bored to tears. (MX)
(A-F, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, www.a-frecords.com)

MY MINDS MINE – "Scenes of the Complete Annihilation of This Planet" LP

There are 26 songs on here; they are all heavy and distorted as shit, they end before they even start, the singer's voice is hard to separate from all the other layers of distortion. Fucking depressing lyrics over grinding music. (WR)
(Amenta, PO Box 990, 9400 AZ, Assen, HOLLAND, www.amentarecords.com)

NAZIS FROM MARS – "Fuck You" LP

A tool can be a catalyst for good or evil, depending upon who's wielding it. A hammer in one man's hand might be used to build a house. That same hammer in another's hand might be used to bludgeon kittens. NAZIS FROM MARS use their keyboards for evil. I feel like a kitten bludgeoned to death by a drum machine. It's a crying shame, because there are some amazing SHONEN KNIFE style pop songs on here crying out for help under the excessive synthesizers. If you can stomach the techno aspects of this band, there is some catchy new wave at the heart of these songs. (JB)
(Hate, via S. Giovanni in Laterano, 194-00184, Roma, ITALY)

NEUROTIC ARSEHOLES – "...Bis Zum Bitteren Ende" LP

This is a re-release, which originally came out in 1983. Remember those peace-punk bands of the late 70s and early 80s whose singers and lyric writers seemed to be poets in disguise? The MOB are a good example. This guys' words are bardic prose. Musically I am reminded of LEATHERFACE with some weird, unnamable German new wave mixed in. Some CLASH-style ska. This is a very interesting punk disc. Each song is a bit different, with a simple guitar fuzz weaving it all together. Recommended, at least so we can remember the variance in style once considered punk, something being forgotten in a scene dominated by "street punk" and heaviness. This record displays a hope not prevalent in most depressed bands today. This is part of our history. (JA)
(Weird System, Alstertwiete 32, 20099 Hamburg, GERMANY)

NOFX – "13 Stitches" EP

The A-side is a sweet folksy ballad about Fat Mike's first few punk shows, hence the title "13 Stitches." The B-side is a take on "Class War" called "Glass War." This record shows that in spite of their Live 105 airplay, NOFX are the same silly motherfuckers that we have always loved. (DP)
(Fat Wreck, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119, www.nofx.org, www.fatwreck.com)

NOFX – The War on Errorism" LP

Wow! Is NOFX going political? Hurry, somebody call Satan because I think hell just froze over. Is this the same band that brought us such lovely songs as "Please Stop Fucking My Mom" and "Vegetarian Mumbo Jumbo?" OK, maybe they haven't lost their edge, because the sense of humor is still firmly intact here, but they are obviously pretty pissed off about the current political state of the USA. The anger is apparent from the cover art and lyrics, to the long introduction that touches on everything from political apathy to the failed Florida election process of the 2000 presidential race. But don't fear, because as I mentioned there is plenty of low-brow/high humor stuff here as well. Which is why you listen to NOFX anyway, right? Just try "She's Nubs" or "Anarchy Camp" on to see what I mean. Or maybe you buy their records because their songs have always been totally upbeat and catchy as fuck. At this point I am sure you are well aware whether you love or hate this band. Personally, I have always loved NOFX and I thought this was a quality addition to their ever-growing catalog. (RC)
(Fat, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119, www.fatwreck.org)

NOISE RATCHET – CD

Part of the whole slick emo thing here. Similar to AT THE DRIVE IN and JIMMY EAY WORLD without the originality or material. I thought I would like this, but it just seemed too generic. Maybe I was turned off by them listing the William Morris Agency as their booker on the jacket. A new unknown band being booked by the pros? I sense a stepping stone plan going on here. (RL)
(Militia Group, 7923 Warner Ave. Suite K, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, **nratchet@cts.com**)

NONE MORE BLACK – "File Under Black" LP

I'll say it up front; the reason this band has caught my attention is because it is the child of Jason Shevchuk, singer of KID DYNAMITE, a band I really loved. Most of the songs on the album are very similar to the poppier KID DYNAMITE songs. If you're not familiar with that band, I might group this band together with newer bands like STRIKE ANYWHERE and TRIAL BY FIRE, but more straightforward, with less of a hardcore edge. I have to say, I like this album. Probably the most disappointing part for me was the art, which seems kind of graphic-designy and like they could have just thrown any bands name over it in computer font. (WR)
(Fat, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119)

NOT ENOUGH BULLETS / D-COMP - split EP

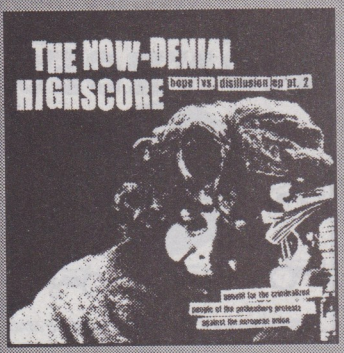
D-COMP pounds out a five-song assault of ferocious blast beat mayhem. Imagine a grittier, lo-fi REVERSAL OF MAN. On the other side we have NOT ENOUGH BULLETS, who are the highlight of this split. Their songs are similar, but the intensity level is way higher. They totally took me by surprise with these five songs of unrelenting chaotic hardcore filled with energy and rage. (VH)
(xstevemx@hotmail.com)

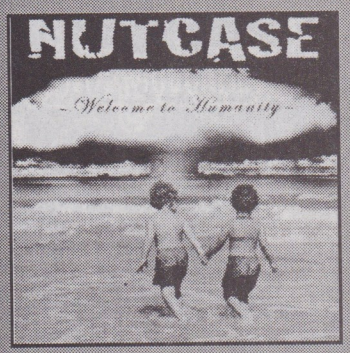
THE NOW – "Here Come the Now" LP

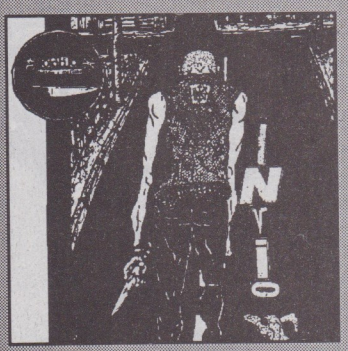
Once hailing from that hotbed of punk rock, Peterborough, England (a town more famous for its charismatic football manager than anything else), we had a rotational pull of six snitching herberts collectively known as the NOW. Way too urgent and foot-on-the-distortion-pedal to be classed in with all the other 70s power poppers with similar sounding names. Definitely a band that kept a slight wayward eye on the Blitzkrieg Bop emanating across the seas, but with still enough discarded gluebags littering the rehearsal floor to maintain its cheeky English charm. Spanning the years of '77 to '79, taking in the sing-along appeal of the BUZZCOCKS and the charged power pop of the CARPETTS, this is highly recommended. (SD)
(Last Years Youth, Last Big 4, lastyearyouth@web.de)

THE NOW-DENIAL / HIGHSCORE – "Hope Vs. Disillusion Pt. 2" EP

This is a benefit split for the criminalized people of the Gothenburg protests against the European nation. It's the second release for this cause, and this one features the NOW-DENIAL, who plays heavy political crust not unlike CATHARSIS or HIS HERO IS GONE. It's good, though not particularly distinct or unique







from any of the other bands that play in this style. HIGHSCORE plays high energy, fast 80s-esque hardcore. (LG)
(The Now-Denial, PO Box 105824 28058 Bremen, GERMANY)(Highscore c/o Sebastian Stronzik, Meppenerstr. 23, 48155 Munster, GERMANY)

NUTCASE – "Welcome to Humanity" CD

Ah, the French. These guys prefer freedom fries to their own homefried variety. So much that not only do they sing in (delightfully ungrammatical) English, but do their best to sound like their Anglo/Yank brethren. They have a nice line in LEATHERFACE/later period GOVERNMENT ISSUE tunes, and twin driving guitars. Lovers of guitars and hardcore melody should check this out. (RK)
(Maloka,www.nutcase.fr.st)

ODIO – "Solidão E Conflicto" EP

There's raw blown-out-to-the-gills recordings and then there's Brazil's ODIO. Seriously, this sounds like it was recorded on a boombox, in the next room over, with amps set to eleven—a quiet and distant, yet sonically messy recording. Once you're able to get past all that, you're in for a delightful treat of mid-paced raw hardcore that alternates from CONFUSE/GAI style intensity to RUDIMENTARY PENI-type dirges. Distorted-out-the-wazoo music with garbled vocals that sound like some sort of beast clinging to the last moments of its life. Noise, not music. (MT)
(Absurd, c/o Marcelo Batista, Caixa Postal 302, Osasco / SP CEP 06002-970, BRAZIL, **absurd@brfree.com.br**)

OHLO DE GATO / VISIONS OF WAR – split LP

OHLO DE GATO plays incredible blistering crust-core with awesome heavy guitar breakdowns and a totally vicious assault on vocals. Features the singer from BOYCOT and a member of PATARENI. This is so fast and furious. Awesome—totally blows my mind. VISIONS OF WAR, from Belgium, plays eight mind-numbing, powerful crust-core songs. Fast and heavy at the same time. Brutal. (LG)
(Angry c/o Fulvio Dogliotti, c.p. 280 15100 Alessandria, ITALY)

OIL – "Better Get It in Your Soul" EP

Although there are a few bands called OIL, I'm pretty sure this is the one that I have wanted to hear for a long while. The band is fucking good, and I mean that. They are heavy, fast and melodic, but not too cliché in anyway. Musically, maybe if you took faster youth crew bands and mixed them up with LEATHERFACE, you might get something like this. Really, it sounds a lot like the newer material of a Finnish band that I really love, called ENDSTAND. This is a re-release of a one sided 12", so watch out if you already have that. Otherwise, this is damn good if you want to be rocked. (WR)
(Peterwalkee, PO Box 14794, Albany, NY 12212)

OPPOSED – "No Gods No Masters" CD

No, not a cover of crusty doom lords AMEBIX (I wish), but a bunch of youngsters playing melodic hardcore with a street punk edge. It has the Warped Tour double speed drumming, and guitar leads with gruff vocals and some gang woah-ohs. I'm sure they are a gas live and if you're from Ohio you'd do well to check 'em out. One word of advice: lose the cover of "Johnny Too Bad." It's horrible. (TB)
(www.theopposed.com)

PAINTED ROOM - "Take a Drive" EP

This 7" picture disc (!) comes with a quasi-Avalon Ballroom poster that bears the motto, "if you want more action, groovy 60s sounds and extraterrestrial vibes…" Guess I'll chalk up the choice of slang and slightly labored vocals to the Deutsch origin, rather than drugs (not discounting that possibility entirely) because this is a pretty straightforward throwback (get it?) to late Sixties psych-pop flavored hard rock: lots of fuzz guitar riffage, a sideways take on the "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" riff, cover of the SHADOWS OF KNIGHTS "Dark Side." Not too shabby. (DD)
(Swamp Room, Postfach 5663, 30056 Hannover, GERMANY, www.swamp-room.de)

PANTHERS - "Let's Get Serious" 12" EP

The PANTHERS seem to have outgrown the ULYSSES/MAKE UP pretensions of their Troubleman LP and found a sound that just feels more natural, maybe honest? The songs are long—it's pretty easy to get self-indulgent with a five song 12" to play with—but in general they work. The cheap shot would be "emo kids in the garage," but I'm not cheap. The lyrics this time out are direct without being didactic. I can't tell you what a turnaround this is to me—if this was the first thing I'd heard by the PANTHERS I'd have had a totally different opinion of them. I'm pleased by this development. (AM)
(Dim Mak, PO Box 348, Hollywood, CA 90078)

DUANE PETERS & PASCAL BRIGGS – "Suicide Child/Cold, Cold Ground"

You know Duane: skateboarding prodigy, ink-stained workhorse, Los Angeles punk rock fixture, documentary talking head, U.S. BOMB. Guitar player P. Briggs gets second billing for reasons that remain unclear. "Suicide Child" is a tear-jerking drama/rant associated with San Francisco's NUNS who released it as a single long, long ago. I've always been fond of the tune, and am pleased to hear that Mr. Peters can find his way through the vivid lyric imagery ("you couldn't cope/you stole my dope") without stumbling off a cliff. "Cold, Cold Ground" is a Tom Waits tune played subtlety and with a lighter touch than I would have expected from the parties involved. Not sure I'd play it more than once, though. Proof that we all turn into lounge singers eventually. (JH)
(I Used to Fuck People Like You in Prison, Schäferstrasse 33A, D-44147 Dortmund, GERMANY, www.peoplelikeyou.de)

PHOBIA – "Grind Your Fucking Head In" CD

The Southern California grindcore maniacs are back again this time with a seven-song CD that is a total crushing assault of pissed-off energetic madness. These guys play totally tight, no-frills death/grind metal that has a savage political message and no-holds-barred enthusiasm that will get any head banging with furi-

ous intensity. Dual male singers switch from a punishing growl to merciless scream. I also heard these guys did a split with RESIST AND EXIST—can't wait to check that out. Fuck yeah—grind fans take note, this one is killer. (LG)
(www.jellobung.com/phobia/)

PHOENIX FOUNDATION – "These Days" 10"

What is it about Finland these days? There seems to be a never-ending stream of great melodic punk bands coming out of there: ENDSTAND, MANIFESTO JUKEBOX, and now these folks. This 10" is a real treat. The *Metal Circus*-era HUSKER DU comparison is obvious, but there's other stuff too—up front, intricate guitars, not unlike LEATHERFACE's best gear, with heartfelt vocals pushed back in the mix, lamenting loves lost and hearts broken. It's very much like MANIFESTO JUKEBOX, but I found more hooks buried within, which has kept me flipping this disc over and over. Smashing. (TB)
(Combat Rock Industry, Hameenpuisto 16 B 31, 33210 Tampere, FINLAND)

PHONOPHOBIA – "Of the People" EP

PHONOPHOBIA are a Japanese grind/thrash unit that also has some incredibly boring super slow sludgy parts. Vocals are a dual effort, with a growly male and high-tone screamy female. This one doesn't really do it for me. (LG)
(Phonophobia_insanity@yahoo.co.jp)

PIGNATION - "Devastating Life Scheme" CDEP

Poland's own power-violence HC/grind unit kick out fierce and heavy thunder-core. Gruff, growly vox; machine hammered drumming; precision-guided guitar; aggression, power, speed, all equaling one devastating CDEP sure to make you snap your neck or die trying. Seven songs in 12 minutes. Fuckin' Power. (WM)
(Deep Six, P.O. Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510-6911, www.deepsixrecords.com)

PINK AND BROWN - "Shame Fantasy II" 12" EP

12" EPs are like buses—none for an hour and then three turn up at once. I don't remember hearing this band before (although there's every chance I've had 'em on my top 10) but I've seen the name bandied about so it's good to finally check them out. I'm liking what I'm hearing—pretty noisy, wacky, rhythmic punk with treated vocals. Makes me think of the STRETCHHEADS or something like that. Not as wacky as FAT DAY or MELT BANANA, but too arty for broom-handle-down-the-back-of-the-jumper hardcore types. I like. (AM)
(Load, no address)

PLAN A PROJECT – "Locked Hearts and Hand Grenades" CD

This band has been around for a while now, and I have picked up a few of their 7"s in the past years. This, I believe, is their second full length on Go Kart, and they are sounding basically like I remember them from the 7"s. Good, though not great, punk rock in the vein of RANCID or many street-punk bands I can think of (do people actually use that term? I am out of the loop). PLAN A PROJECT, from what I can tell, has a really good attitude, and I sense no phoniness, which is what makes me care to listen to them. At times, the vocals remind me of FYP, in the charming way that they fall out of tune with the songs. As with past PLAN A PROJECT releases, the art on the record is well done. A good album, here. (WR)
(Go Kart, PO Box 20, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012 www.gokartrecords.com)

POIKKEUS – "Järjeton Maailma" EP

Following the lead of LAUKAUS, here's another Japanese EP that looks and sounds like an early EP by RIISTETYT—they're probably even singing in Finnish—except the band is from Osaka. This is outstanding hardcore, all six tracks recalling 1982-vintage HC with classic laryngitis vocals, but with that amazing recording edge the Japanese seem to have nailed down. It's like finding an old classic—a must-have. (SS)
(Crust War Overseas, P O Box 511, Whippany, NJ 07981-0511)

POSSIBLE SUSPECT – "So Sick of Your Dependency" CD

This lo-fi CD uses emotion and politics to overshadow the lack luster execution. The SUSPECT'S uncompromising stances on complacency, personal responsibility and three-chord punk help deliver a fresh old school feel to this eight-song disc. A good head check for those older more jaded punks. (HM)
($12 ppd: Mad Butcher, Kurze Geismarstrasse 6 D-37073 Göttingen, GERMANY, www.madbutcher.de)

PROVOKED – "Infant in the Womb of Warfare" LP

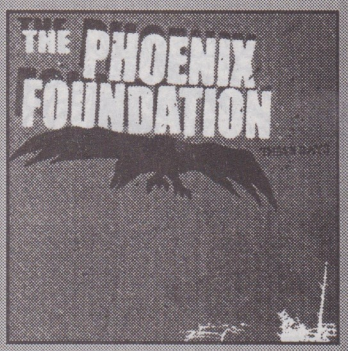
PROVOKED plays super intense, scathing crust from Minneapolis. Fast, vicious, and frantic. There are cool scaled bass lines and interesting guitar riffs, not to mention a totally ferocious and rabid female frontwoman. The record sleeve has some awesome apocalyptic artwork. Badass. (LG)
(Profane Existance, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistance.com)

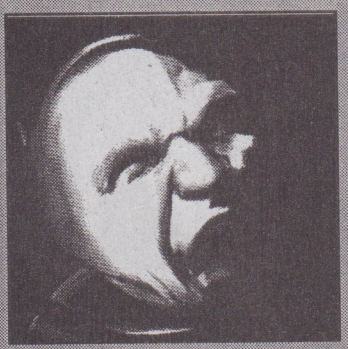
PSEUDO HEROES – "Prison of Small Perception" CD

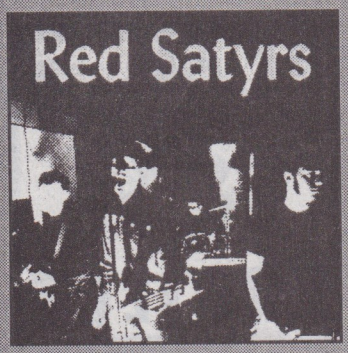
This is a great CD. 19 tracks of melodic hardcore, with the odd angry blast, and a BLUE OYSTER CULT cover to boot. Plus you get an all-star cast of guest vocalists singing a track each—Dave Smalley, John Stabb (GOVERNMENT ISSUE), Blaine Cook (ACCUSED), Chris Bamons (PINK LINCOLNS), Lee Dorrian (NAPALM DEATH), Jerry A (POISON IDEA), and Kam Lee (DEATH). Musically, this is definitely more DOWN BY LAW than MASSACRE, but it's all rather superior. (RK)
(Go-Kart, **www.Gokartrecords.com**)

RAZORS – "Rare & Live" LP

RAZORS were one of Germany's first hardcore bands, and they were pretty damn good. I remember having to trade some dude (Uwe—aren't they all named Uwe?) to get their first and third 7"s. As I recall, I didn't have to give up too much for them. Anyway, this is those 7"s, the second 7", and some of a 12" on the first side, with a live performance from 1979, which would have been early in their existence, on the other side. The studio records are worth having if you are a hardcore fan and do not own them. I'm not much of an his-







torian, so I'm not really a big fan of most live stuff. As live stuff goes, this is OK. It's not great, but it's good. You make the call. (KK)
(Last Year's Youth, lastyearsyouth@web.de)

RAZORS EDGE – "Thrash March" EP

This record came out a long time ago, but never really made it outside of Japan. So the folks over at Busted Heads decided it was time for a reissue. For those not familiar with RAZORS EDGE they contain the singer from JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS. That should tell you a lot…if not then imagine listening to some insanely fast spazzed-out thrash with high-pitched vocals. These tunes will make you jump around in circles with a huge smile in your face. If not, then maybe you should get your hearing checked. (RC)
(Busted Heads, Box 275 901 06 Umeå, SWEDEN, www.bustedheads.com)

THE REAL McKENZIES – "Oot & Aboot" LP

Wow, it's like the POGUES on punk. BR would call this streetpunk; I call it pub punk. Same difference. It's OK stuff. It's Scottish (or is it?) punk rock that's kind of slick, probably a little too slick, but decent enough. If you like songs about booze and pirates and don't mind the bagpipe, this'll have you jerking off in no time. Honestly, it might sound like I'm slagging this, but the truth is I kind of like it. (KK)
(Honest Don's, PO Box 192027, San Francisco, CA 94119)

THE REAL MCKENZIES – "Pissed Tae Th' Gills" LP

Godshittingdamnit, I don't know how these guys combine STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, bagpipes, BLITZ, and a non-nationalistic pride of self and heritage and come out sounding so fucking good. This is a live recording and it sounds amazing. Against my better judgment, I highly recommend this record. Against your will, you can love it, too. (JA)
(Social Bomb, Heckenstr. 35/HH, 47058 Duisberg, GERMANY)

REALITY CRISIS – "Open the Door And Into the New Chaotic World" CD

I'm glad there are folks out there keeping the peace-punk torch burning. I want to hear less doom and gloom and more "it can change…it will change." These Japanese punkers sound like CONFLICT with the one of the singers from EXTREME NOISE TERROR behind the mic. It's a crusty peace-punk extravaganza from start to finish and I'm all over it. Some of the lyrics sound a little odd, but I love shit like "We are king monkeys with excessive knowledge." Yes mate. (TB)
(Answer, Bld No.2 B1, 5-49 Osu 3 Naka-Ku Nagoya City, Aichi 460, JAPAN)

RED REACTION – "I Think We're Fucked" EP

Really good rockin' fast hardcore in the vein of the newer A-TEAM stuff and the SUICIDE FILE. The track "Take Me to Hell" was ripped straight from a song off one of the first four BLACK SABBATH albums. I just haven't figured out which one yet. Great musicianship all around where each member gets to do his share of wanking. (CC)
(Coalition, Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, THE NETHERLANDS)

RED SATYRS – "Suicide Rockers" EP

Rockabilly-ish garage right along the lines of the CRAMPS. Fast guitars and reverby vocals, then they slow it down for a bit. Catchy stuff. (CK)
($3 ppd: THD, PO Box 18661, Minneapolis, MN 55418)

RED UNION – "Rebel Anthems" CD

Lefty German political punk. More CLASH than CRASS, and musically, a mix of mid-period BAD RELIGION and pre-rock 'n' roll RANDY. Perhaps not as stirring as the aforementioned stalwarts, but this hums along at a fair clip. Enjoyable stuff. (RK)
(Bandworm,www.oi-punk.de)

RIISTETYT - 10"

I fucking love this band. RIISTETYT plays some of the toughest and most scathing Finnish hardcore ever. They are so godamn good it makes me want to beat my own brains out of my head. This 10" is no exception to their greatness. It's a complete hardcore assault makes my life worth living. Shit this is good! (LG)
(Fight, Hikivuorenkatu 17 D 36 3370 Tampere, FINLAND, www.kolumbus.fi/fight)

RIFFS – "Death or Glory" LP

Death or Glory. Live Free or Die. He Who Dares Wins. Blood and Honor. All could have served as prospective titles for the RIFFS' LP. Twelve songs ("Poison Boys", "All the Boys", "LA Suicide", "Wasted Years", etc.) delivered by a gang of dudes who look like a young version of GBH, with all their spiky acountrements and elaborate array of tattoos. I can see at least one *Midnight Madness & Beyond* t-shirt in the cover pics, so I can tell it's not an accident. At times they approach a sorta NEW YORK DOLLS bad-kid chug, which wins. Not particularly my mug o' cider these days, but they love their job and are good at what they do. (JH)
(TKO, 3126 W. Cary St. #303, Richmond, VA 23221, www.tkorecords.com)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS – "Something to Crow About" LP

This is so fucking rawk I feel my sideburns growing. This is that sweaty, "we're white trash, how chic," "my shirt says 'Jack Daniels' and I drink PBR" stuff that leaves me limp. I will gladly pass on this, but thanks for offering… (BM)
(Gearhead)

ROLLING BLACKOUTS – "Add Vice / I Don't Know Much About Anything"

Twangy guitars, jerky hooks, damaged art rock garage feel, good NATION OF ULYSSES-era IAN SEVONIUS screaming vocals with added chorus harmonies. Like the KINKS mixed with a rawer GUN CLUB. This record cooks. (AS)
(Kapow! PO Box 813, Fullerton, CA 92836, www.kapowrecords.com)

ROYAL ROUTES – "Medium Middle Madie / Humdrum Humbug"

A Canadian super group featuring Edouard and Martin of the SCAT RAG BOOSTERS and Danny of LES SEXAREENOS and SPACESHITS. Bluesy trash that rocks out. "Medium Middle Madie" is a fast dance number with distorted guitars and pounding drums, even a little harmonica thrown in to keep it interesting. "Humdrum Humbug" delves more into a slower blues-garage style, kind of living up to its title. Great stuff. (CK)
(Goodbye Boozy, Via Villa Pompetti, 147, 64020 S. Nicolo (TE) ITALY, cheddylarocque@hotmail.com)

RUNNING LIKE THIEVES – "The Approval of the Crowd" EP

Well, I am not sure where to start here but what is this band trying to accomplish? This is sort of rock, sort of hardcore….uh well sort of crappy. Maybe they were trying to go down that mid-tempo emoish route of STATUE (remember them?), but don't quite cut it. They speed things up a tad on some songs, but it just doesn't have any energy to it. Maybe it is the singer's monotone vocals. I don't know, but I couldn't get into it at all. (RC)
(Livewire, PO Box 007, Mendham, NJ 07945, www.livewire-records.com)

RUTH'S HAT – "Hitchhiker's Guide to Rock and Roll" CD

Boy this band doesn't really change. Harmonies, geeky "wish we were cool but we're not" high voices, Mutant Pop vets, yadda yadda yadda. I'm done. Why does Fast Music suck so much? Note to band: I know you're Canadian, but wearing shorts on stage makes you look like a bunch of 'tads. Consider investing in nice trousers or possibly jeans. (BM)
(Fast Music, PO Box 206512 New Haven, CT 06520, www.fastmusic.com)

SBGB – "Ate Your Pizza" CD

How come so many bands from Mass play mid-tempo streetpunk? I've lost count of the bands from this state I've reviewed that sound like this. Don't get me wrong—it's not necessarily a bad thing, I was just thinking aloud. So, in the spirit of DARKBUSTER, SUSPECT DEVICE, VIGILANTES, DROPKICK MURPHYS, DUCKY BOYS, and countless others, comes SBGB (I've no idea what that stands for) who play…mid-tempo street-influenced punk, and write silly songs about the Pope being a punk and whatnot. (AD)
(SBGB c/o Average Day, PO Box 20217, Worcester, MA 01602)

SAINT CATHERINES - "The Art of Arrogance" CD

A seriously great CD from these French Canadians. A punker, more pure, maybe even better version of the HOT WATER MUSIC you grew to love in the mid-90s has been spawned in Montreal. Crunchy guitars, cool album art, posi-spirited lyrics...rad stuff. And if that weren't enough on its own, a quarter of every record sold goes to a non-profit supporting sex workers' rights. Solid agenda and good music. Get this. (AS)
(Dare To Care, PO Box 463 -Stn. C, Montreal, Quebec, H2L 4K4 CANADA)

SCHEMATIC OF A WAKING LIFE / STAB YOU IN THE HEAD - split EP

Don't let the disgusting electro-house-dance-remix cover art scare you away. SCHEMATIC plays emotional yet angry, aggressive hardcore packed with hateful screams and piercing guitars tones. If this record came out six years ago, I'd see them touring with 400 YEARS and SLEEPY TIME TRIO. STAB YOU tears through five tracks of heavy '88 style hardcore. Youth shouts, mosh parts, and cynical lyrics... (VH)
(Redscroll, 5 Arbor ln., Wallingford, CT 06492)

SCIENCE OF YABRA – "Check the Sound" LP

This record came out well over a year ago, but I will still delight in giving it another listen. Take the more frantic bits of DRIVE LIKE JEHU and HOT SNAKES, crank the volume ten-fold and make the vocals just a bit more aggressive, and you have SCIENCE OF YABRA nailed. The music is executed perfectly and the charging fury of each and every song never lets up. Not only is SCIENCE OF YABRA easily accessible to fans of the aforementioned bands, they are also knee-deep in a more heavy hardcore sound (say, HEROIN) that would undoubtedly appeal to people of a more "hardcore" persuasion. Clearly this is not an accident. A fucking great record and perfect for one of those early morning "wake the fuck up" tapes. (SP)
(PO Box 2368, Portland, OR 97208-2368, scienceofyabra@yahoo.com)

SHORTCUT/ASIDE – split CD

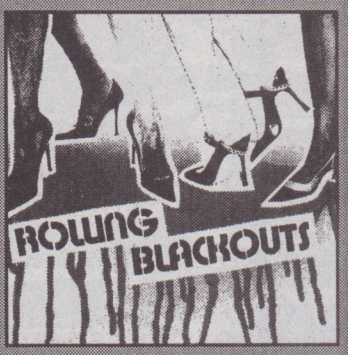
SHORTCUT, from France, tear through seventeen rapid thrash influenced hardcore numbers in twenty-five minutes. Dual vocalists duel over socio-political lyrics in English. I imagine these guys would fit in well on a 625 *Barbaric Thrash* comp. ASIDE on the second half of this disc really grabbed my attention with their more powerful approach to the same sort of thrash hardcore as SHORTCUT. Again dual vocalists but this time one is male and one is female and their songs are sung both in French and in English. They do covers of INFEST, METAL URBAIN, and the ELECTRO HIPPIES. They also broke up in 1999. This is a five-label effort and is proving to me that there is a lot more quality hardcore coming from France than I previously thought. (WM)
(Mass Productions, 19 rue Malaguti, 35000 Rennes, FRANCE, www.massprod.com)

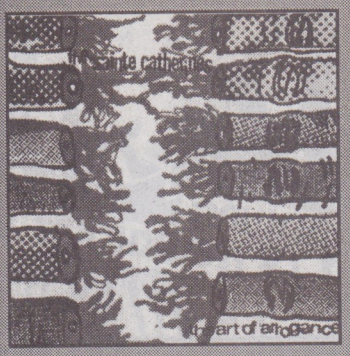
SICK 56 – "Recipe for Disaster" CD

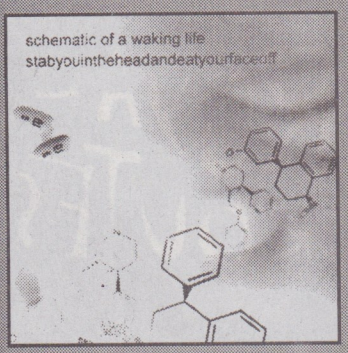
Good hard punk rock from England. It has an old school feel, influenced I'm sure by all the Riot City/No Future bands of the 80s. This has great heavy production that brings out the drums real nice, and is pretty slickly packaged, so you're getting quality for your punk rock dollar. The lyrics are political without the sloganeering, and deal as much with everyday life as the government. If you like your punk hard and heavy with a British flavor (and who doesn't?) then check this out. (AD)
(JSNTGM, PO Box 1025, Blackpool, FY3 0FA, UK)

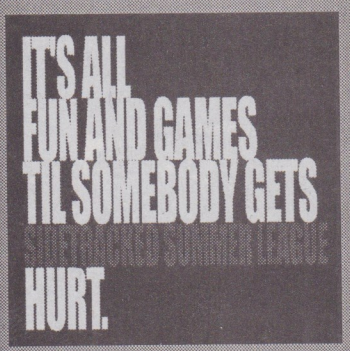
SIDETRACKED/SUMMER LEAGUE – split EP

With split records, the reviewer is almost always going to compare and then choose a favorite. It's just one of those de-facto zine truths. On one side we have SIDETRACKED, who sound like CARRY ON on crystal meth, and on the other side we have SUMMER LEAGUE, who sounds like a mix between FADED GREY and STRIKE ANYWHERE. SIDETRACKED fits four songs onto a side, while SUMMER LEAGUE









fits two. Even with an incredibly loud snare drum, SIDETRACKED are my favorite side by far. Was there any doubt? (CC)
(Pave The Way, 411 Pt. Fosdick Dr. NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98335)

THE SINGULARITY – "Thirty Three" EP

I have seen this band a few times, as they are from the Bay Area, and was impressed by them. However, most of the recordings I have heard have been a little disappointing. They remind me a lot of SMALL BROWN BIKE and DBS at times, but lack a lot of the power that makes/made those bands really good. Something about this hits me right, though. Look forward to seeing this band progress. (WR)
(www.thesingularity.8m.com)

SIR KILLALOT – "Painting by Numbers" CD

Irish punk rock. No Guinness, no bagpipes, no folk, no phony working class sentiment—I mean punk rock *from* Ireland. It's pretty heavy, pretty rock, with a lot of tempo changes and effects. The emphasis is primarily on the bass, with the guitars and vocals taking a back seat on a few tracks. It reminds of a lot of stuff as diverse as LEATHERFACE, BONECRUSHER, KARP and DILLINGER 4—you'll just have to hear it. I really like this—it's good solid shit and punker than a drunken monk—my only gripe is the Manchester United jersey on the back cover. Aside from that it's great. (AD)
(Rejected, PO Box 6591, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, IRELAND, sirkillalot@eircom.net)

SIVA – "Mosaic of Sleepers" CD

Sounds like somebody's been boning up on his *Guy Piccioto's Guide to Emoting*. Same strange vibrato, same breathless grunts, but none of the vulnerability to actually pull it off. On top of that, it seems that one of the former members of AT THE DRIVE-IN was somehow involved with making this record happen, and the music sometimes bares quite a strong resemblance to that band as well. They've got the effects pedals and everything. This band holds a certain amount of promise, and I look forward to what directions they may push this in, but for now it's too derivative to matter. I will be watching, though. (MX)
(Restart, PO Box 220266, El Paso, TX 79913, www.restartrecords.com)

SKIDS – "Days of Europa" CD

This reissue came out awhile back when it didn't clear the punkness bar. But now that we've finally discovered new wave and other old arty releases like the NEON HEARTS, I'm gonna work this in. The great second album from this Scottish band, best known for first LP hits like "Into the Valley" and "Sweet Suburbia", this has hits like "Working for the Yankee Dollar" and "Charade". Featuring one of my musical heroes Stuart Adamson of BIG COUNTRY fame on guitar and production by Bill Nelson, this record is guitar new wave art heaven from 1979. Their shining moment LP wise. Bonus LP tacked on too! Nuff said. (RL)
(Captain Oi)

SKIT SYSTEM – "Allt E Skit" CD

The titans of Swedish crustcore, SKIT SYSTEM. This CD discography ('95-'99) of the already legendary band includes the *Ondskans Ansikte* 10", the *Profithysteri* EP, the WOLFPACK split, and five live tracks. Devastating. (VH)
(Distortion, Box 6294, SE-400 60 Gothenburg, SWEDEN)

SLEAZIES – "Gonna Operate on Myself" EP

As someone who recently lost his medical insurance, I feel for these guys. Just last month I thought I had to have my tonsils removed, and I sure as hell can't afford that, so I after a few Beam and Cokes, I entertained the idea of doing it myself. That's what you get here, folks—drunken, halfassed idiocy, and I mean that in the nicest way possible. This band looks like the STITCHES (if the STITCHES sniffed glue), maybe even sounds like a catchier/poppier STITCHES (if the STITCHES sniffed rubber cement too), but I seriously don't think they are anywhere near as braindead as the SLEAZIES, and again, I mean that in a good way. Two songs, neither really lyrically in-depth (did I mention these guys don't seem too bright?) but they are infectious and simple enough to stick in your skull all day long. (BM)
(Rapid Pulse, PO Box 5075 Milford, CT 06460, www.rapidpulserecords.com)

SLIME - LP

Mandatory re-issue of the most important German punk band. SLIME defined the "German punk sound," playing urgent melodic punk sung in their native tongue. This LP from 1981 is not only fantastic musically, packed with rousing anthems, but also uncompromising lyrically with attacks on the state and the police, like "ACAB" and "Deutschland Muss Sterben" ("Germany Must Die"). This LP was confiscated and banned in Germany because of the inflammatory lyrics—the band even had secret police infiltrating their gigs as they were seen as a threat to the state. Punk rock! I urge you to pick up all three SLIME records reviewed this month as your collection is lacking without them. (TB)
(Weird System, Alstertwiete 32, 20099 Hamburg, GERMANY)

SLIME – "Yankees Raus" LP

Another in the great Weird System series of reissues, *Yankees Raus* is the hard-hitting second album from 1982 from the greatest German punk band, SLIME. More developed and with better production than their eponymous first LP, while losing none of the punch or anger displayed on said record. Melodic without being wimpy, with uncompromisingly political lyrics, this is really their finest moment in my mind and a definite must-have in any punk rocker's record collection. The soundtrack for nights spent squatting buildings and days spent smashing cops in the face. Fucking as amazing now as the first time I ever heard it. (MT)
(Weird System, Alstertwiete 32, 20099 Hamburg, GERMANY, www.weirdsystem.de)

SLIME – "Alle Gegen Alle" LP

I love punk rock. Our immortal songs and best ideas sprouted in little basement nests of dirty, self-conscious kids, who somehow look so brave and sexy in their old muddy LP insert photos. This is a new press of SLIME's third album from 1983, a great one, with melodic songs colored with danger and immediacy, maybe like the ADVERTS. Excellent, original German punk. (AC)
(Weird System, Alstertwite 32, 20099 Hmaburg, GERMANY, www.weirdsystem.de)

SOLGER – "Live at Wrex, Seattle Nov. '80" EP

This EP contains live and very raw versions of two SOLGER songs, recorded very likely off a cassette machine. "Do Me a Favor" is lost in a fog of noise somewhere, but the outlines of a great song can be heard in "Scheme & Fraud." Both songs have their share of ambient club noise and distortion, but one wishes for recordings with more definition. (SS)
(skybranin2@earthlink.net)

SPEEDBALL JR – "Whiplash" CD

"Not a surf band like all the others…no garage or sixties influence on this release, nope…" claim the liners. Fortunately, SPEEDBALL JR has the sense to hew close to MAN OR ASTROMAN? and STRAITJACKETS style surf rock, eschewing the aimless noodlings of progressive "surf" bands that ply their trade at P.P McSorely's on $3 Budweiser nights. So more power to them. (DD)
(Drunkabilly, Postbus 87, 9050 Ledeberg, BELGIUM, www.drunkabilly.com)

THE SPINNS - "Shadows…In My Mind!' EP

Four slabs of garage purism in mid-tempo mid-fi mono, satisfying enough that I won't take issue with the copped chord progression on the "self-quilled" "In This World All Alone." Just a further mark of purity. The moody numbers ("Shadows In My Mind" and "Ow!") seem to be their special strength. (DD)
(Demonbeach, PO Box 6693, Raleigh, NC, 27628-6693, **www.demonbeachrecords.com**)

SPIT FOR ATHENA – "Tom Cruise" CD

I'm not really used to narrative songwriting in punk rock, so it kind of throws me off when a lyric sheet reads more like a story than a list of grievances. As a lover of books, I appreciate the deviation from the formula. Too bad the lyrics here get mired in BLOOD BROTHERS-esque shock statements like "vaginas are the welcome mats to doom." Memo to all those trying to peddle this type of shit: people will be much more shocked if you just fucking write a good song than if you talk about how you want to eat my yeast infection or something. All this comes over formulaic screamo. We got your loud/soft dynamic, we got your clean verses and distorted choruses, we got your impassioned screams. We got a good record? That's still debatable. (MX)
(Friction, PO Box 6605, Grand Rapids, MI 49516, www.frictiongoods.com)

THE STARVATIONS - "One Long Night" CDEP

A nice dark, eerie, psychedelic, country feel for this So Cal rock troupe headed by none other than Gabriel Scarecrow Hart. The first song's great, but the rest gets boring after a few listens. This'll probably be huge next year, so take a hint and check out tomorrow's rock stars. (HM)
(Kapow! PO Box 286, Fullerton, CA 92836, www.kapowrecords.com)

STIGGAN ANDERSSON – "Paasta Irti" EP

Definitely a break from the Finnish norm, STIGGAN ANDERSSON aims for a more clubby rock sound. The material ranges from relatively hard-rockers like "Olen Ihiminen" to a strummed, sedate mid-speed ballad ("Luottokeluoton"). This has personality, but doesn't exactly jump off the turntable. (SS)
(Roku, Poroelontie 1a3, 96100 Royaniemi, FINLAND)

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS – "Wasted Life" LP

Thirteen rare tracks and B-sides from the late 70s pub rockers turned street punks STIFF LITTLE FINGERS. Included are the single version of "Suspect Device," the Peel Session versions of "Law and Order" and "Barbed Wire Love," both sides of the "Straw Dogs" single, live versions of "Wasted Life" and "Tin Soldiers," and a few others. A good addition to the collections of you SLF fans, if you can find it. (DP)
(no address

THE STRAP-ONS - "Dirty People" LP

....well, this isn't terrible....BUT IT AIN'T GREAT EITHER!!!! .....snot punk done with a modern production sound.....the music is pretty basic generic going in circles kinda stuff, but it's the singer who holds the magic.....great vocal style....great lyrics too...I can use a singer like this for my own pleasures here in Frisco....I wonder if he's a top????? (SW)
(Zurich Chainsaw Massacre, PO Box 44, CH-8953 Dietikon 2, SWITZERLAND, www.zurichpunkconnection.ch)

STRUCTURE OF LIES / MISERY INDEX – split CD

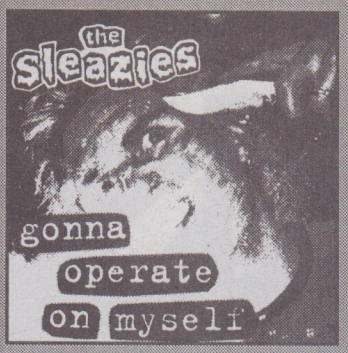
STRUCTURE OF LIES plays eleven tracks of bone-crushing grind. Fucking dramatic stuff here. They go too far with the metal guitar leads for my tastes. MISERY INDEX dish out more of the same, with an odd Nick Blinko vocal twist. They keep it fast and straightforward, which is what I like. I'm really not much of a grind fan though… (VH)
(Deep Six, PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510)

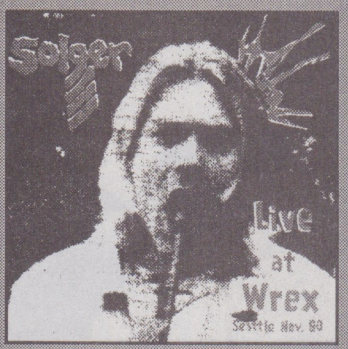
STRUNG OUT – "Live in a Dive" 2xLP

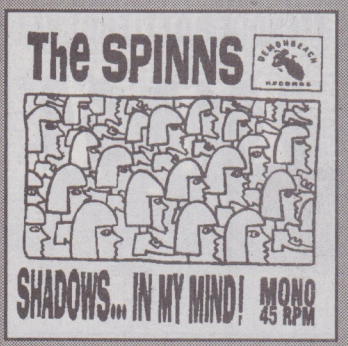
To paraphrase a PET SHOP BOYS song, "What the fuck did I do to Mike Thorn to deserve this?" four long-play sides of STRUNG OUT… live. This is produced better than most records I own that were recorded in a studio. Reminds me of the live POISON cassette tape I once owned when I was a little shaver. Except POISON didn't try to pass themselves off as punk rockers, and CC Deville is ten times cooler than anyone in this band. Hey, the comic book that came with it was cool. (CC)
(Fat Wreck, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119)

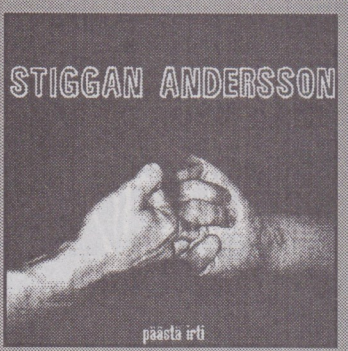
SWEET JAPANESE AMERICAN PRINCESS – "Virgin Vibe" CD

SWEET J.A.P. crank out fast syncopated punk in the vein of SCARED OF CHAKA but not as good. *Virgin Vibe* is a valiant effort and solid release. (HM)
(Big Neck, PO Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195, www.bigneckrecords.com)









SUBMERGE / DEAD FOR A MINUTE - split EP

Two French bands that play very different styles of hardcore. SUBMERGE unleashes three songs of ultra-heavy terror and destruction, similar to HIS HERO IS GONE with a heavier metal influence. DEAD FOR A MINUTE combines chaos and melody without sacrificing any of the energy or rage, and end up with two tracks of surprisingly original sounding emo-hardcore. (VH)
(Simon Fabien, 2 rue de Colombier, 57185, Clouange, FRANCE, http://deadforaminute.free.fr)

SUBMERGE / KARRAS – split EP

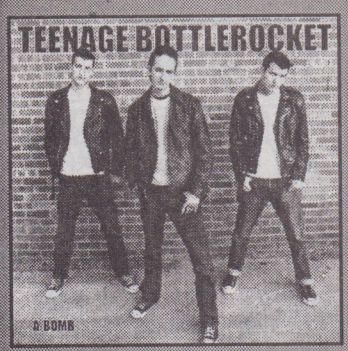
A pretty cool split of two bands from France. SUBMERGE play some blistering core in the vein of CONVERGE styled intensity; hoarse voiced; thick distortion riffed; the drums are over the top precise without sounding like a machine; there's plenty of variety within the mix; quick tempo'd; damn good. I like a lot. KARRAS on the flip is more metallic crusty hardcore, sounding similar to what CATHARSIS mixed with TRAGEDY might be like if they were French. Inside cover art is pretty kick ass, in my opinion. (WM)
(Shogun, 39 Rue du Mont d'Arène, 51100 Reims, FRANCE, www.burnoutzine.net)

TEAM EMU – "Plug In And Play" EP

This is a trashy punk band from Atlanta, GA. They sound a lot like the B-SIDES and a little like a crappy version of RED CROSS. Pop punk in a raw way, not in a polished, QUEERS way. They should have gotten together and re-thought the instrumental song, but other than that, this is cool. (JB)
(Ghostmeat, 707 Forest Heights Dr, Athens, GA 30606)

TEARS – CD

The TEARS (as in ripping, not crying) bust out the bluesy, noisy, trash-tastic, mid-fi, boy/girl-fronted goods. Featuring Nick G from half a dozen great Wisconsin bands (CATHOLIC BOYS, etc.), this album makes you want to drink, dance, and destroy everything around you. This band must be amazing live. I can imagine it now—we're all at the Parkside, I'm nursing a Beam and Coke, Mitch Cardwell is falling down drunk, the place is packed and sweaty, the TEARS tear through a half-hour set, leaving everyone and everything broken. Glass shards and empty bottles soak in the beer puddles on the stage and floor. Everyone walks out to light a cigarette, just like a good time bedroom romp. Wish you were there. (BM)
(Trick Knee)



TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET – "A-Bomb" EP

These three bad boys from the badlands of Wyoming give us four tracks of raunchy RAMONES-by-way-of-SCREECHING WEASEL punk rock. When I saw the cover I thought it would be a QUEERS-type lame-fest but this rocks in a snotty underage drinking in leather jackets kinda way. So much of this stuff sucks but when it's done right it's hands down my favorite kind of music and TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET do it well. I wonder if they know the LILLINGTONS… (AD)
(One Legged Pup, 1814 Steele St., Laramie, Wyoming 82070)

TEMPERS RISE / LOS ASESINOS DE LA SUPERFICIALIDAD – split LP

Here we have two very tight bands from the Netherlands battling it out on one thick slab of vinyl. I threw on the LOS ASESINOS DE LA SUPERFICIALIDAD side first and was really stoked to find seven tracks of charged mid-tempo hardcore easily bringing to mind a certain BREAD & CIRCUITS / BORN AGAINST combo. As the second track ("Us Liars") galloped forward with the phrase "we are all liars," I couldn't help but sing along. See, it's memorable moments like those that really have a bit of an impact on the listener. On the flip, TEMPERS RISE break out the Big Muff distortion pedals (on the vocals as well as guitars and bass) for nine HONEYWELL-inspired tunes. I very much like the style, but I should say that so many things are happening in the higher frequencies that it gives the recording a bit of an overly blown-out feel. But then again, that *is* part of the charm HONEYWELL recordings have. The songs are heavy and frantic, but there are also complexities and change-ups that keep things interesting. Four different labels put this out, including Coalition. I would highly recommend this to anyone interested in international hardcore, or any of the aforementioned bands. A quality release. (SP)
(Graan Republiek, Bankastraat 37, 9715 Cd Groningen, NETHERLANDS, m_hoogvliet@hotmail.com)

THIRD GRADE TEACHER – CD

THIRD GRADE TEACHER are low to the ground and 'heavy' in an early 90s ALICE IN CHAINS kind of way, with hair tossing and lotsa reverb on the vocals when you most expect it. Opening track "Conductor Semiconductor" is a big drag. Modern Rock schlock that I don't want to hear willingly. No thankee. (JH)
(Pinch Hit, www.pinchhit.com)

THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY – "The Cleveland Finger" CDEP

THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY are a loose-limbed gang of kids that flex muscle and jump and shout. It's a quick five tracks, but has enough promise to bode well for the future. "Art Project" has as neat art-jazz blended with punk feel that bodes well. I can hear a sorta angular LE SHOK noise approach lurking behind all the noise. (JH)
(Exit Stencil, PO Box 110775, Cleveland, OH 44111, www.exitstencil.com)

THE THREATS – "12 Punk Moves" CD

No prizes for guessing how many tracks on this CD. To their credit, the THREATS are that rare example of a band that reformed—perhaps literally 20 years later—and sound considerably better than they did back in the day (early 80s in their case). When I last saw em, in 1980 supporting the DEAD KENNEDYS, they were remarkable only for the fact that they played four cover versions (EXPLOITED, SEX PISTOLS, and ANTI-PASTI's "No Government," twice!) in their short set. This new record (I think they only had one 12" EP out back then) is really good. They've managed to recapture that UK '82 sound of bands like ANTI-PASTI, PARTISANS, *et al*, add somne modern production and CLASH guitar frills, but retain a remarkable edge and bite for a bunch of fat, middle-aged geezers. Good for them. (RK)
(Doctor Strange, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

THREATS – "Demos & Rarities" CD

A good compilation of this early 80s Brit punk band's stuff including the *Go to Hell* EP and the *Politicians and Ministers* 12" EP. Add 18 additional tracks from various sessions and you have a good old school release. Anthemic oi-ish stuff a la EXPLOITED and GBH. (RL)
(Dr. Strange, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

THREATS – "Live At CBGB" LP

Two single no-marks from the early 80s return with a live LP from New York. I thought this was going to suck, but it's not half bad—they do all their UK '82 "hits" ("Politicians and Ministers," "Go to Hell," etc.) with more speed and energy than the originals. Limited to 500 with hand-screened covers...so go get 'em, spiky tops. (TB)
(Dr. Strange, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

THROW RAG – "Space Hump Me" CD

For the last time, goddammit, I don't have sideburns! This is more of that chic-white trash bullshit, complete with dirty wifebeaters, cowboy boots, and a washboard. This is complete monkey spooge. At their best, they bring in the Orange County brand of choad rock; at their worst, they are just an unfunny novelty. (BM)
(BYO, PO Box 67609, Los Angeles, CA 90067, www.byorecords.com)

THUMB'S UP! – "Building an Army!" EP

Maybe it's just the mashed potatoes talking, but this sounds like a drunk SLAPSHOT. They are from a town near Boston…and then they are like any number of Milwaukee bands, mainly ANIMAL FARM and MACHINE THAT FLASHES. (JA)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134)

TO HELL AND BACK – "Messed Up / American Taliban"

From New York state TO HELL AND BACK give us two tracks of gnarly rockin' hardcore. The first track is faster than the flipside but it's pretty mid-tempo all in all. Maybe a little too metal for my tastes—though I like the way in the lyric sheet they'll write who's playing the lead SLAYER-style—but I still like this better than a lot of hardcore around today because…well, it rocks. Features an ex-DEVOID OF FAITH-er. (AD)
(Coalition, Newonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, NETHERLANDS)

TRAKES – "Circa…3172" CD

Alien garage wave purveyed by Junior Rocket Rangers in bad-boy shades. The TRAKES (as in "tracheotomy") deal in death and destruction, delivered from the business end of a phaser cannon. "In the future, there is no sex", they proclaim. Despite their Ed Wood trappings the TRAKES are full-bodied and refreshing, though I coulda done with a little more demetia weaving back and forth between the lumpy power chords. The addition of acoustic guitar, synth effects, and general goof-off epic feel makes me think of the DAMNED's *Black Album* or something similar. Epic drones married to less-than-serious concepts. Skillful execution. Funny names. The world may never be able to penetrate the mystery of the TRAKES, but I'm sure we'll have many chances. (JH)
(Amp c/o Jonee Obvious, 4348 Fairview Rd., Columbia, PA 17512)

UNCIVILIZED – "Urban Karnage" CD

I think these guys are French Canadian (but that's no excuse for having goatees *and* mohawks)—as they sing in French and English but have Anglo names—but I could be wrong. Angry punk with an old British influence, sped up to a hardcore level, with lyrics dealing with animal liberation, squatting, and being a punker. (AD)
(Wounded Paw, 26 Brookfield St., Toronto, Ontario, M6J 3A9 CANADA)

UNDER DOGS - "The Hours are Long…" CD

This record is screaming for a circle pit. Lots of guitar solos, more blastbeats… lyrics about war. Check. (MM)
(Black List, ttmasc@tin.it)

UNHOLY GRAVE - "Chaotic Raw Madness: West Coast USA 2002" EP

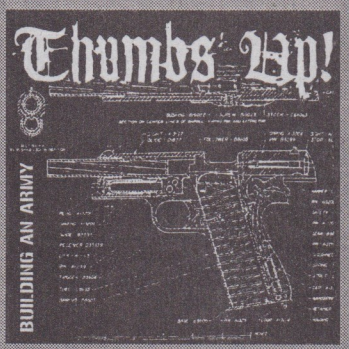
Awesome document of UNHOLY GRAVE's 2002 West Coast tour. The recording isn't that great but it's also not really that bad considering that UNHOLY GRAVE play caustic grindcore and sometimes it's really about the energy not the audiophile quality, as is the case here. The packaging features a detailed tour diary, tons of photos, notes on the shows, lyrics, reproductions of all the flyers, and then some. A majority of the songs are from the recent *Against Terrorism* EP. As someone in the crowd says: "Fuck Yeah!" (WM)
(Agromosh, PO Box 2480, Escondido, CA 92033)

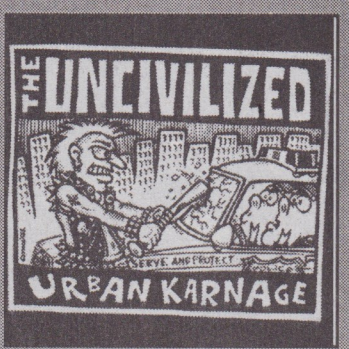
UNHOLY GRAVE / GYARANDU – split EP

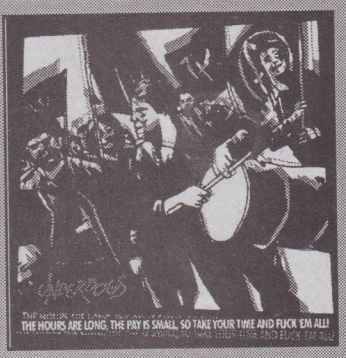
Haha….will the onslaught of UNHOLY GRABVE records ever stop? I guess not, because here we go again. This time around they share the vinyl with GYRANDU. GYRANDU whip through three tracks of fast metallic-tinged hardcore with overbearing vocals (actually they were just recorded to high up in the mix). UNHOLY GRAVE slaughter your eardrums with four more tracks of grinding metalcore. You should know their story by now. (RC)
(Bloodbath, c/o Yutaka Kimura 1-6-2, Kokubun, Ichikawa, Chiba 272-0834 JAPAN, www.bloodbath.jp)

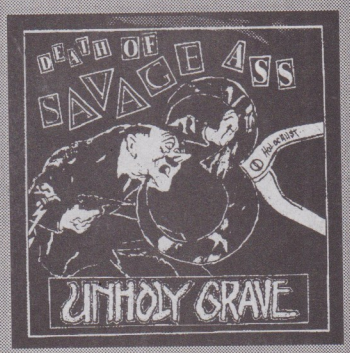
VERSE – "Four Songs" CD

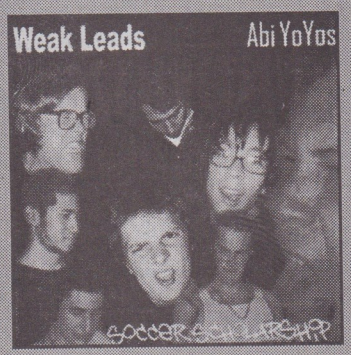
Four songs of fast modern melodic hardcore with some youth crew influence. Think later TURNING POINT, but more epic. I can get past the guitar octaves and the big production of this style, but I am tired of the generic jud-jud guitar riff that is the default for a lot of the newer youth crew bands. Not even ten seconds into the first song, and the guitar is already playing it. With those minor complaints aside, VERSE is a really good band. I can see why my drummer is always talking about them. I wouldn't be surprised if a bigger hardcore label didn't pick these guys up. Contains members of WHAT FEEDS THE FIRE (CC)
(Contrast, PO Box 2492, Providence, RI 02906)











VILENTLY ILL – "Heal the Earth" LP

This is some seriously damaged, lo-fi, DIY trash thrash punk core. Fucked up beyond a single care, VILENTLY ILL play fast and… well, fucked up. Distortion guitars, competent drum machine beats and blasts, yelled vocals of some of the punkest lyrics I've read in a long time—hardcore hardcore hardcore. They remind me vaguely of an early-mid BLACK FLAG. The covers are cut and glued, the labels are hand written, and my copy is on a sweet piece of swirly baby-blue vinyl. The more I listen the more I say "Highly recommended to people that like things different from the normal trends and fashions." (WM)
(Peer Pressure Zombie, PO Box 41035, San Francisco, CA 94141-0325)

VIZA-NOIR – "No Record" CD

This sounds like what I've heard of the MOONEY SUZUKI, perhaps with more fucked up time signatures and some slower songs. Sure, it adds some variety and holds my interest for a nanosecond longer than normal, but do we really need another band like this? Fuck naw. Whatever happened to all those clown ska bands? That genre's ripe for a comeback if it would only kill fucking boring "garage" with rockstar posturing. (MX)
(Flameshovel, 1658 N. Milwaukee #276, Chicago, IL 60647, www.flameshovel.com)

WEAK LEADS / ABI YOYOS – split CD

Rory, godfather of the Bay Area punk scene, who you may remember from the band the B-SIDES, resurfaced recently along with B-SIDES drummer Toshio and the Bay Area's best punk bassist with an excellent band called WEAK LEADS. They fucking rule at the ANGRY SAMOANS-style old-school punk, with over the top high-pitched vocals. ABI YOYOS are definitely one of my favorite Bay Area bands right now, and I mean that so seriously. Sounding like a mix between MDC and DEAD KENNEDYS-style punk with YOUNG PIONEERS or AGAINST ME!, they are totally refreshing and original, with no pretense. My only concern with giving this an all outs "you must buy this CD" review, is the fact that I don't know if it will give a great first impression. The CD is recorded live off the radio, so there is a decent amount of fucking around and talking between songs. It is funny if you know Rory, but may not hold your attention. If you don't check out this release, *please* check out these bands on the future releases, which I'm sure will exist. (WR)
(Pat Riot, weakleads@asshats.net)

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? – "No Cash…No Thrash!" EP

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT features members of ALL YOU CAN EAT, like Devon Morf, who I've known since I was 14. I love that guy. I don't know why *Maximum* chose me to review this record. There's lots of chugga-chugga guitar and the most crazy "hop-on-the-space-coaster" guitar solo on the second side. Their amps must be the size of the Sears Tower. Heavy thrash punk, very metal, with a sincerely gay, epic breakdown on "Zombiefication of Anytown, USA." Maybe take a bong hit and then check this out. (JB)
(Found & Lost, IN More 7, 34564, Berlin, GERMANY)

WTIM – CD

Fuck drum machines. Anyone who thinks it's OK to use computers for blast beats needs to have a monitor smashed over their head, then strangled with a mouse cord. (VH)
(Sugar Hill)

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH / SICK TERROR - split EP

Two more tracks from those fighting squirrels from deep in the heart of Texas. More schizo-bopped, tormented powertooling from the Japcore-inspired Finnish wannabes, but unfortunately what sounds like a deuce of solid tunes is lost in a butchered pressing. Next up and sprinting off the blocks is Brazils SICK TERROR, again suffering from the aforementioned, which is a damn pity. What I can make out, however, puts me in mind of a more supercharged, punked-up REFUSED, electrified hits included. (SD)
(Terrotten, A/C Renan Favero, Caixa Postal 8080, Cep 90201- 970, Porto Alegra – RS - BRASIL)

YHTEISKUNNAN YSTÄVÄT? – "Natsirunkut" EP

Hailing from northern Finland (most of the Finnish scene is centered in the south), YHTEISKUNNAN YSTÄVÄT? (FRIENDS OF SOCIETY?) cranks out nine ripping tracks of classic hardcore punk that brings to mind the melodic buzzsaw approach of their Finnish punk forefathers, APPENDIX. This is fucking great stuff with lyrics critical of the Finnish mandatory military service system, nuclear power, and mass consumption. Finland is such a hotbed of great bands right now, and this only adds to its reputation. (MT)
(Roku, Pordelont / E 1 A 3, 96100 Rocaniemi, FINLAND, rokurecords@hotmail.com)

YOU AND I – CD

Around in the late 90s, YOU AND I missed the screamo scene at its peak, but somehow still seemed to capture the mood and the sound perfectly. The *Saturday's Cab Ride Home* 12" is going for a lot of money on the internet these days. A CD discography like this is over-do. Simple layout, with lyrics and not much else. 23 tracks, compiling everything they released plus five live tracks, with awful recording quality. (VH)
(Alone, PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126, www.alonerecords.com)

ZEMEZLUC / THE CRUNKY KIDS – "East Block Meets Midwest" split EP

ZEMEZLUC plays totally unrelenting and nasty 80s style Czech punk, fast and infectious. CRUNKY KIDS are a nasty thrash hellspawn from Painesville, OH. Noisy, violent, and totally obnoxious. Features some ex-9 SHOCKS TERROR and GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS members. (LG)
(Hibachi, 497 Owego St, Painseville, OH 44077)

ZERSTORTE JUGEND – "Tanz Aus Dem Ghetto" LP

This urgent blast of West Berlin thrash gathers strong evidence for ZERSTORTE JUGEND's standing as one of the best early 80s bands. Early comparisons with INFERNO are apt, but tunes like "Selbstmord" and the LP's title track show a band capable of fleshing out their tunes with incisive guitar work to balance their sound. This gathers together tunes from their debut LP with their *Spastic Nightmare* 12" and compilations. The best stuff here is really outstanding. (SS)
(Weird System, Alstertweite 32, 20099 Hamburg, GERMANY)

V/A - "All That Was, Ten Years at the Old Fire House" CD

Cool benefit comp for the Old Fire House, Redmond, Washington's all-ages venue. Proceeds go to help build a new media lab so folks will have cheap access to recording equipment. Sounds like a pretty rad cause to me. The CD features NOVEMBER GROUP, PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES, JUNO, TCHKUNG!, BLOOD BROTHERS, SICKO, TEN-O-SEVEN, UNDERTOW, GAS HUFFER, and a crapload more bands from the Pacific Northwest. A worthy cause, and a decent comp to boot. What the hell else could you ask for? (AS).
(Missing, PO Box 20114, Seattle, WA 98102, www.missingrecords.com)

V/A – "Casino & Fine Dancing" LP

A comp of Bay Area Filipino bands. Although this claims to be indie and punk it's sounds mostly indie and fuzzpop. There is a punk band as well as a mainstream artist. The eight bands are CHARMIN, AIRBAG, MUD, BOBBY BANDURIA, SKYFLAKES (my fuzzpop gal singer fave), ESKAPO (punk), CLARENDON HILLS, and WESTERN STATES. (RL)
(F.U.)

V/A - "Dark Thoughts: A Tribute To C.O.C." EP

Ripping good compilation with WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?, HOLIER THAN THOU, CAUSTIC CHRIST, and MUNICIPAL WASTE all doing cover treatments of CORROSION OF CONFORMITY. A kick-ass, solid tribute compilation – and I don't normally go for these things. Cover comes wrapped in Mike Bukowski art. Stuff your money into an envelope made out to... (WM)
(Rabid Dog c/o Clay Newell, 6208 McCullar, Haltom City, TX 76117)

V/A – "Fuck You Punx Vol. 3" EP

Four bands. The UK SUBS song sounds like, um, well, a UK SUBS song. Familiar and comfortable. ED TEMPLE I like. SCREECHING WEASEL-esque, pre-crust pop sound. Dirty. DRI. Who? And the last band is...the EIGHT BUCKS EXPERIMENT! Well, I think about NOMEANSNO, CODE OF HONOR, and MINUTEMEN when I hear this song. My most favorite part of this slab is the jacket art, which deserves a guest showing at the *How Much Art Can You Take?* 'zine art opening.(JA)
(Blue Moon, 2075 S. University Blvd, #264, Denver, CO 80210)

V/A – "Guitar Age: Link Wray Tribute" CD

For the uninitiated: Link Wray is the godfather of surf guitar. Even if you think you don't know him, trust me, you do. Streets ahead of his time, his records (which were released from the late 50s to the present) blew minds with their haunting, fuzzed-out guitar twang. Hell, he even punched holes in his amps to blow the sound out! While most tributes leave me cold, this one is pretty interesting; all his "hits" are covered here ("Rumble," 'Rawhide," etc.) by a wealth of people, most of whom have at least a toe in the surf rock pond. All the renditions collected here stick pretty much to the originals, with the twanging guitar leading the way, but each band brings a little something different to the table. Standouts were SPI-FI's cracking, almost ambient version of "The Shadow Knows," and SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS's "I'm Branded." A couple of the tracks were a bit slick, but on the whole I'm digging it. (TB)
(Musick, PO Box 1757, Burbank, CA 91507)

V/A – "Kill Rock Stars 393" EP

One song each by the GOSSIP, the SUPREME INDIFFERENCE, ERASE ERRATA, and SLEETMUTE NIGHTMUTE. The GOSSIP's is a good track, not as full-sounding as the stuff on their recent 10", but a solid, soulful tune—quite a contrast from the next track, by the SUPREME INDIFFERENCE (Kim Gordon's new band), which is noise play, with snorts, moans, and a little music. ERASE ERRATA—you know how it is—they don't feel the need to utilize much of the musical spectrum—there's that one-chord, one-beat paradigm here. Ditto SLEETMUTE NIGHTMUTE, but they have a rawer, less controlled sound that I prefer. I appreciate the cover art; it's very Kleenex/Vibrators, and includes a photo of each band member. This EP was compiled by the GOSSIP. (AC)
(Kill Rock Stars, PMB 418, 120 NE State, Olympia, WA 98501, www.killrockstar.com)

V/A – "Nazis Raus!" LP

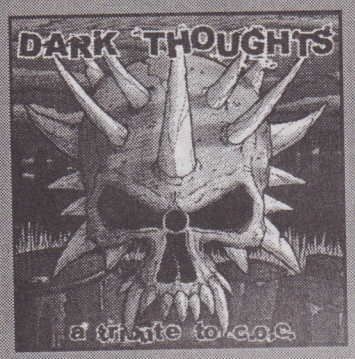
That's "Nazis Out!" to all you uncouth non-German speakers. I gotta say that the traditional beer-drinking singalong sound that epitomized German punk and hardcore of the late 70s and early 80s has never been particularly near or dear to me: maybe it's 'cause it's all too melodic in a voices-raised-in-unison kinda way. This reissue sort of sums up the style, and boasts all the heavyweights of the day: TOTEN HOSEN, BETONCOMBO, BLUT & EISEN, RAZZIA, NEUROTIC ARSEHOLDS, MIDDLE CLASS FANTASIES, BUTTOCKS, SLIME, you name 'em, they're here. The lyrical theme here is anti-Nazi, Nazi skins in particular. It's a nice package but one that doesn't necessarily knock me on the noggin. Students of German punk rock oughtta check it out, though. (JH)
(Weird System)

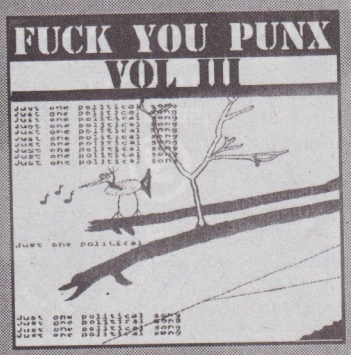
V/A – "Slam-Brigade Haifischbar" LP

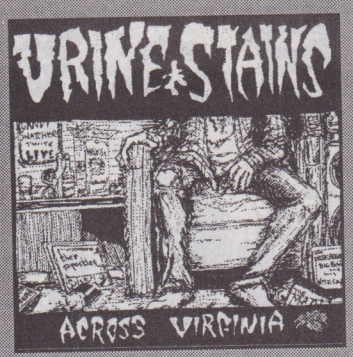
The second in a series (1977-1983 being the first) from Germany. A strong collection if you like the foreign stuff. About half sung in German. Being that the years including are late by historic punk standards, this is mostly hardcore and melodic punk. Bands include RAMONEZ '77, RUBBERMAIDS, PAT FRAZOR & HIS BAZOOKAS, and SLIME to name a few. (RL)
(Weird System, Alsterwiete 32, 2000 Hamburg 1, GERMANY)

V/A - " Swami Sound System, Vol. 1" LP

Firmly keeping the flame burning for that once-bastion of side-stepping burrito-indulging punk rock, San Diego, is Swami Records. Dealing us a crafty hand of eleven bands, eleven tunes swaying from the obnoxious bash of Californian soul meets New York hipster courtesy of BEEHIVE & THE BARRACUDAS, a dizzy detour into the metal power instrumental with slightly European appeal as done by LOINCLOTH, a surprise appearance by 50-grit melodic 70s punkers TESTORS, then racing all the







way over to the fuzz-drenched knee-jerkin hardcore of San Descreamo's MANNEQUIN PISS. Also sporting the gelled-up talents of ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT, HOT SNAKES, and SONNY VINCENT, to name a few. Solid stuff from a solid label. (SD)
(no address)

V/A – "Take No Heroes" CD

It is so rad to know there are youth crew bands from Malaysia and Croatia that fucking rip. *Take No Heroes* is a great international hardcore compilation focusing more on the fast and positive side of things. Surprisingly, there isn't one sleeper on this 71 minute disc. While the liner notes make a point of saying that this is not a straight edge comp, the straight edge youth crew influence is undeniable on at least eight out of the ten bands featured. If I had to pick favorites, I would pick POINTING FINGER from Portugal, RAZLOG ZA from Croatia, FEUD from the Philippines, and ONLY WAY OUT from Poland. But like I said before, no sleepers-all keepers. Includes a thick booklet with lyrics and contacts for all the bands. (CC)
(Boisleve, La Saudrais, 35310 Cintre, FRANCE, coinxxxcoin@yahoo.fr)

V/A – "Unscene Effort Vol. 2" LP

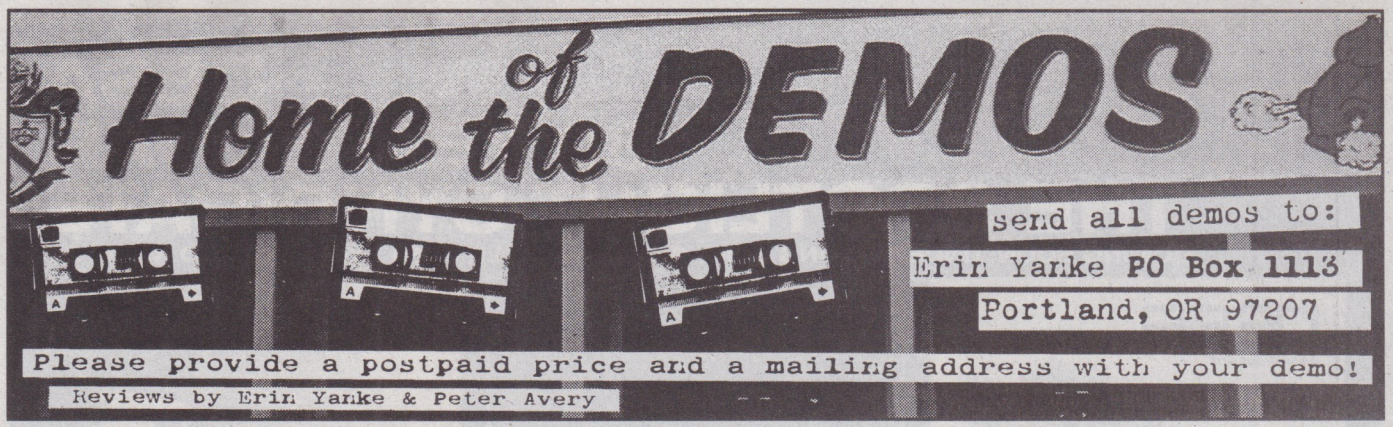
This is a compilation of 20 bands—hardcore of different syles but all with a political bent. Press run of 500 on yellow and red vinyl with a 20-page booklet. Standouts are the MOTTS, FUCK YOUR HEROES, FACE DOWN, FOR INSTANCE, DEFIANT TRESSPASS, HUMAN ADULTS, and DEAD SET AGAINST. (DP)
($7.25 ppd: Sick of Talk, PO Box 9723, Reno, NV 89507, www.sickoftalk.com)

V/A – "Urine Stains Across Virginia" EP

A pretty funny take on the Blood Stains series, with a yellow cover and yellow vinyl that made me want to run and wash my hands. The M80'S, THEE APOSTLES, BIG DADDY AND THE NIGHT CAPS, CANDY SNATCHERS, DIRTY LOVERS, HOREHOUNDS, and HILLBILLY WEREWOLF. Dirty and raunchy rock 'n' roll at its finest. (DP)
(Black Lung, 1549 Chela Ave. #B, Norfolk, VA 23503)

V/A – "Wenn Kaputt Dann Wir Spass; Berlin Punk Rock 1977-1989" 2xLP

Wow, this is really fucking great. Encased within its well-done gatefold cover is a musical map of the history of Berlin punk rock. From early days of UK77/RAMONES/STOOGES obsessed bands like PVC, TEMPO, and FURS, to the anarcho-squat scene in the Kreuzberg section (with bands like KATAPULT, ÄTZUTISSIS and BETON COMBO) and on through to the hardcore years with giants like VORKRIEGSJUGEND, PORNO PATROL, NO ALLEGIANCE, and the MALINHEADS. Comes complete with a 72-page booklet filled with photos, snippets of artwork, and writings detailing the differing movements and progressions of the biggest punk scene in Germany. Simply amazing, and totally essential for anyone who has any interest in learning about German punk. (MT)
(Weird System, Alstertwiete 32, 20099 Hamburg, GERMANY, www.weirdsystem.de)



ALL AMERICAN is a driving pop punk one-man four track project. It's a nice change to hear some scruff in the pop punk. The vocals are shouted and a little distorted. When he mixes it up, it's for slower paced songs that are more guitar driven. (Free! Just send email (jackvirgin@hotmail.com) or a post card. 16 song CD, lyrics included. 14 East Flint St. Apt. East, Lake Orion, MI 48362.)

Bastard Radio is a compilation of bands, about a half-and-half mix of total punk rock (CIRCLE JERKS, NEGATIVE APPROACH), fake rockers (INSANE CLOWN POSSE, KORN, MARILYN MANSON), and rap (CYPRESS HILL, DEAD PREZ). The premise is that a mixed tape is better than a radio show because it isn't limited by time or distance. This functions, at his highest hopes, as a big tape trading clearing house, where you'll send in your bands and he'll make new comps out of his new material. I wish, though, that he'd incorporate more actual radio philosophy into it, and have more information that a DJ would traditionally supply: contact information, when the record came out, that sort of thing. ($1 or mixed tape in trade. 24 songs, no lyric sheet. 2217 W. Lupine, Phoenix, AZ 85029.)

THE BORN LOSERS would have fit in great with the Texas scene of the MOTARDS, and those bands on the "Lonestar Showdown" 7" comps. Rockin and sloppy, snotty vocals, and sometimes they slow it down. This just has the feel though, where you know it's coming from the heart, unlike, say, bands with an early NY fetish, all style and not meaning it for a second. Totally great. (12 song CD, no lyric sheet. PO Box 200072, Anchorage, AK 94520.)

DOPPLELGANGER actually wanted to be reviewed by my dad. Long time readers will remember I threatened that, when people sent things to Mr. Yanke, or referred to me as a guy, I'd send it to my dad. Well, sorry to say, he didn't actually listen to it. He did mention that although he liked seeing my bands play, he didn't even listen to my demos that I sent him, and really, it's just 'cause I'm his kid. Oh well. You should get your dad to review it! But I think it's pretty driving thrash, no breaks needed, and features the traditional screamer guy doing the vocals. The live song at the end sounds like they'd be fun to spazz out to live, but it's hard to hear anything but chaos on the cassette. Some folks go for that, though. The Czech version included five more songs, and they enlarged the liner notes for old ladies like me! ($1 ppd. 5 song cassette, no lyrics included. 5568 Pinehollow Rd., Concord, CA 94521.)

THE FELDMANS play mid-tempo rock songs with equal amounts of sharp edges and pop sensibilities. Mostly it's the crooning vocals and harmonies that make the pop noticeable, but when the other guy who's way more guttural and mean sounding sings, there's still some underlying pop. Then they totally bust out the raging punk, so as to make my review only 90% correct. ($3 ppd. 10 song CD, no lyrics included. 1033 Rosewood Ave., San Carlos, CA 94070.)

GEORGE HARRISON say it all for me in their theme song's chorus: "Russian Hardcore Thrash Attack." There are a lot of slower parts mixed into their thrash attack, however, the power of the driving parts aren't hindered by that one bit. The vocals are shouted, mostly, then there's one guy who screams from real deep in his throat, and there are some cool back ups where the kids probably rush at the mic to sing along. Good work! (Trade or $2 ppd. world. Iarantsev O., PO Box 32, Moscow, 129090, Russia.)

GET IT AWAY is a hardcore band in the mid 80s sense of the term, with catchy song structures, just played faster than you're used to hearing them. No metal or mayhem here, just an occasional guitar lead. Their vocals are half talking-style and half screaming. Then there's a weird bit at the end where they play at slowing down tape. Also, maybe if you write a nice note, you'll get a copy of *Disgruntled Goat,* a one-page zine that's pretty good, too! (5 song cassette, lyrics included. PO Box 13274, Chicago, IL 60613.)

I OBJECT play so fast that when I'm sitting here shaking my head, I'm doing it at half the time they're playing. But on top of the furious pace, there are clear venomous vocals that carry all the anger of the music, but just portray the anger with context, like the best SPITBOY songs. They have back up vocals, too, but they're more like punctuation. Drums are equally as loud, if not louder, than the guitars. This does not bother me. ($3 ppd. 10 song CD, lyrics included. 99 Custer St., Buffalo NY 14214.)

JACKNIFE POWERBOMBS sent in a one-mic live recording, and for that set up, this is good quality. The drums are there, but you can really only hear the guitars during solos. They sound pretty straight forward rocking, totally fun and on the faster side of mid-paced. ($2 ppd. 5 song CD, lyrics included. 291 Butternut Lane, Berea, OH 44017.)

THE J.L.Q. are a mid-tempo, almost power pop band. They're catchy, but they play a little too sloppy for that genre to fit easily—not sloppy enough to be a fast garage band, although sometimes they bust the songs up a notch or two. More importantly, though, they are totally funny. (This is where I tried to type out some lyrics and they all seem dry. So just trust me on this one.) The songs are kind of sung, kind of snotty, and fun. (13 song CD, lyrics included. 100 W. 14th St., Rolla MO 65401.)

JOHN BRADY'S ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN play pretty traditional pop-punk, mid-tempo and with upfront guitars. The vocals are all singing (no yelling or screams) and convey, judging just by the tone, sentimentality and warm-heartedness. (4 song cassette, no lyrics included. 276 5th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94118.)

OVERWEIGHT YOUTH is an acoustic project, one man and four tracks. The songs are 90 percent romantically straining and pensive, with the remaining being punch line themed songs. All acoustic guitar, but sometimes a harmonica comes into play. (Free! Just send email (jackvirgin@hotmail.com) or a post card. 16 song CD, lyrics included. 14 East Flint St. Apt. East, Lake Orion, MI 48362.)

PAPER LANTERN play mid-tempo to slower pop melodies with a basic punk rhythm section. The faster songs are better at conveying energy. The vocals are slightly snotty, but also concerned with harmony—especially the back-ups. (5 song cassette, lyrics included. 762 13th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5T 2L3, Canada.)

PINATA LAZER is a mix of total metal darkness—heavy guitar orientation and dual vocals that are from a couple different depths of hell—and tempos that mix it up a lot, as well as unusual instrumentation, which might just be guitar feedback and other sounds I don't recognize. (3 song cassette, no lyrics. 8400 Ponce Ave., West Hills, CA 91304.)

Seguiremos Inconformes, Doble Tribuot a MASACRE 68 is a double cassette comp tribute to MASACRE 68. The tapes are separated into bands from Mexico, and foreign bands. There's a wide range of punk rock going on, and also some cool genre-pushing bands. I think it's pretty cool, even without being very familiar with MASACRE 68 (insert poser comment here). Features, from Mexico: STRESS, ALCOHOLIC YOUTH, ANTICUADOS, CABEZAS PODRIDAS, CONTRAKAOS, COPROFILIA, DODO SAPIENS, GAMMA GAMMA 2.0, LA CONTRA, LOS IMPOSIBLES, LUCHA AUTONOMA, SENORAS Y SENORES, S.PUNK.JA., SUENO DE LUNA, and TRAUMA, and from elsewhere: AFO, BRIGHT LIGHTS, DESTRUCCION, EMBATE, FORCA MACABRA, FRONTERRORISMO, INSUMISION, INTENSITY, JABARA, and KONTRAATTAQUE. ($9 ppd. 26 song cassette, no lyrics, but lots of cool looking liner notes, in Spanish. Mike Valladares/GC, Apartado Postal 1879, 64000, Monterrey, Mexico.)

THREATENER is a pretty straightforward hardcore band, with some good rockin' bits, mostly used as introductions. The pace is on the fast side of the scale, but not to blazing, and the vocals are traditional screaming style. Also, their address is only good until August, so although a demo is a real physical thing that you need to use the actual mail system to get, you can contact them at mpriehsjr@emichedu. (5 song cassette, lyrics included. 942 Woodlawn, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.)

2UP is cool post-punk in it's quirkiness and driving beat, still with good rockin' intentions. Are the songs sung in Japanese, or just in an accent? There are lots of good screams, in this, like he was moved in the moment. (13 song cassette, no lyric sheet. 6627 N. Congress, Portland, OR 97217.)

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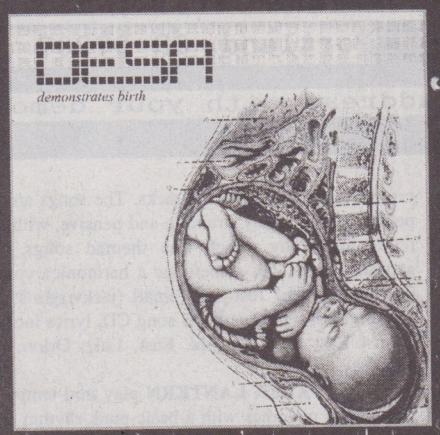

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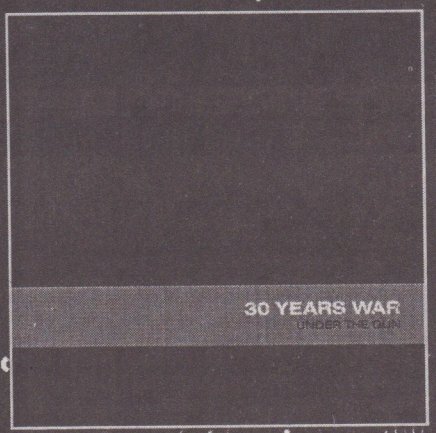

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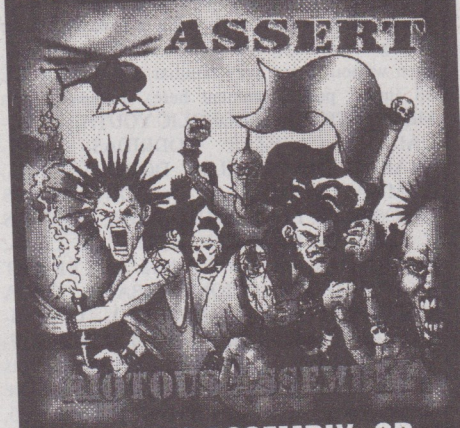

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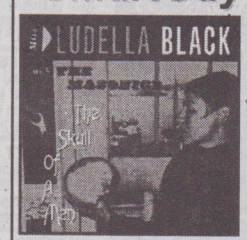

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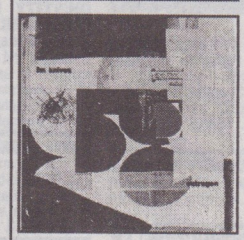

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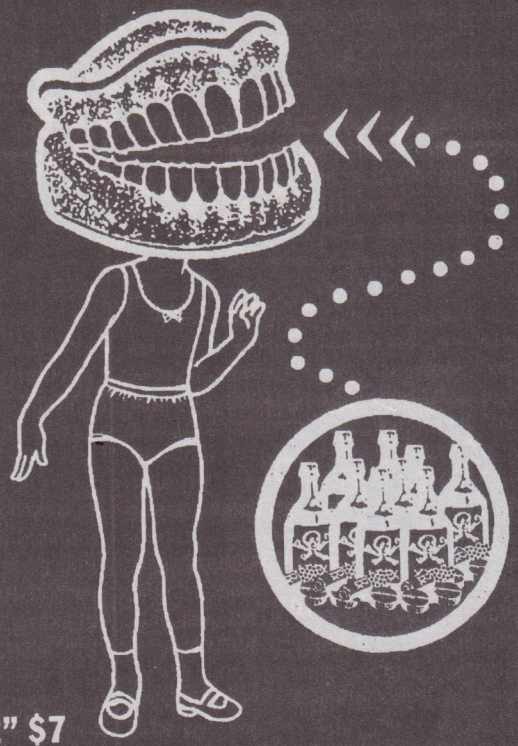

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NINE SHOCKS TERROR Zen and the Art of Beating Your Ass The "lost" LP re-issued. This is a totally remastered and remixed second release of the hard to get first LP which came out on Devour Records of Japan in 1999. An over the top wall of thrash. Brutal no-holds-barred sonic assault. This is the most powerful material by the most intense band in hardcore today. CD contains all Nine Shocks' recorded material other than the Paying Ohmage LP. 38 tracks total, including all the 7" and comp tracks. **LP HC1204 & CD HC5009**

MISERY The Early Years Includes the Born, Fed, Slaughtered, Blindead, and Children of War 7"s, the Misery side of the split LP with SDS, and the Production Through Destruction LP. 71 Minutes of Amebix style apocalyptic crust. Split release with Crimes Against Humanity Records. **CD HC5004**

HOLDING ON Just Another Day LP / CD Crucial hardcore from Minnesota's Holding On! Mixes the crunch of Judge and Chain of Strength with the anger and raw power of Negative Approach. Totally pissed off, raw, powerful Hardcore! Split release with THD, Havoc and 1% records. **LP HC1203 & CD HC5003**

DS•13 Killed by the Kids One of the best bands in hardcore today. Amazing second LP of early 80s-style thrash/ HC/ punk. Excellent production, Pushead cover art. **LP HC1202 & CD HC5002**

VARIOUS ARTISTS When Hell Freezes Over Compilation LP Featuring Code 13, Misery, Dreadnaught, Onward To Mayhem, Arden Chapman, Segue, Feed the Machine, Scorned, Calloused, Fallen Graces, & Pontius Pilate. All new material by 11 Minneapolis punk/ HC bands. Styles vary from street punk, to crust, to grind, but it's all punk and all Minneapolis. Split release between Havoc, Sin Fronteras, and local bands. **HC1201**

CODE 13 Complete Discography 1994–2000 All the 7"s and comp tracks with one unreleased song. **CD HC5001**

ASSEMBLY OF GOD Submission Obedience Denial New band with members of Brother Inferior, Burnpile, and Subsanity. Fast punk/HC a lot like the later Brother Inferior material. **HC7026**

VITAMIN X People that Bleed Third 7" by this Dutch SEHC band. Fast HC sound similar to DS-13 or Life's Halt. Great political SE lyrics and high energy HC. **HC7025**

TEAR IT UP S/T Ex Dead Nation, killer fast hardcore with lots of drive and energy. **HC7024**

DS•13 / CODE 13 13 song split 7" Sweden and Minnesota united in fast, raw hardcore pride. **HC7023**

REAL ENEMY / HOLDING ON Twin Cities Hardcore split 7" Political straight edge and youth crew hardcore. **HC7022.5**

NINE SHOCKS TERROR Mobile Terror Unit 7" EP Awesome raw fast thrash from Cleveland. **HC7022**

KAAOS Nukke Re-issue 1985 Finnish HC, classic stuff. **HC7021**

CLUSTERBOMBUNIT...and the Dirty Little Weapons 7" EP Brutal dis-core from Stuttgart, Germany. **HC7020**

UNITED SUPERVILLAINS (USV) Escapist 7" EP crucial fast HC similar to old Boston bands like DYS, Siege and SSD full speed ahead! **HC7019**

SPAZM 151 S/T 7" EP Second 7" by this Texas HC powerhouse. Hardcore like Black Flag, Poison Idea or Battalion of Saints. **HC7018**

DEMON SYSTEM 13 Aborted Teen Generation 7" EP U.S. press of this amazing Swedish hardcore band, fast aggressive powerful old-school hardcore. **HC7017**

CODE-13 A Part Of America Died Today 7" EP Third and best EP from Minnesota thrash punk defenders of the faith–twelve songs. **HC7016**

TAMPERE SS Kuolutt & Kuopattu 7" EP Demo and comp tracks from this crucial Finnish hardcore band of the early 80s. **HC7015**

TAMPERE SS SS Sotaa 7" EP More incredible Finnish thrash hardcore first released in '83. **HC7014**

NOTA/BROTHER INFERIOR split 7" Tulsa, Oklahoma's best hardcore old and new. **HC7013**

PROTESTI S/T 8 track EP Originally released as a demo in 1983, this is Finnish HC in the classic Propaganda Records style. **HC7012**

HEIST Pain Is Causing Life 7" EP Wicked fast and brutal HC in the Infest tradition. Second EP by this Australian thrash outfit. **HC7011**

DISTRAUGHT S/T 7" EP HC7010

MURDERERS S/T 7" EP HC7009

CODE-13 They Made a Wasteland and Called it Peace HC 7008

H-100'S Texas Death Match 7" HC 7007

MASSKONTROLL Warpath 7" EP HC7006

CODE-13 Doomed Society 7" EP HC7005

BRISTLE System 7" EP HC7004

AUSROTTEN Fuck Nazi Sympathy 7" EP HC7003

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE In a Few Hours of Madness 7" EP HC7002

DESTROY Burn this Racist System Down 7" EP HC 7001

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ZINES

Reviews by: (AC) Arwen Curry, (AR) Aragorn, (JB) Julia Booz Ullrey, (MD) Mikel Delgado, (SD) Sara Double-Ears, (JH) Jeff Heermann, (HH) Harald Hartmann, (CJ) Chloe Jensen, (JM) Jeff Mason, (MN) Mimi Nguyen, (CR) Casey Ress, (MT) Mike Thorn, (GZ) Gordon Zola.

Please send your zine in for review. Write down any information you want included in the review; method of printing, number of pages, issue number and post paid price. If you want us to include a foreign post paid price, tell us. If you accept trades, tell us. The only information we will include is what you provide us.

AGITATE #1 / $1
8.75 x 12 - copied - 4 pgs
You English D-beat anarcho-punkers will be stoked to get this free handout. Page one is news, mostly pertaining to info/record shops and collectives, with some pictures of Frank from Atrocious Madness. Page two is zines, page three is records; photographs of Boxed In and Forca Macabra appear. The zine page especially is good. The final page has a statement from a London Anarchist Federation with their aims and publications detailed. They are against unions and syndicalism. I think those things are all right, but still recommend this. (JM)
c/o Chris / Flat 5 / 7 Westgate / Shipley / BD18 3QX UK

ANARCHY: A JOURNAL OF DESIRE ARMED #55 / $4.95
8.5 x 11 - printed - 84 pgs
Normally I talk about anarchist publications in relation to the greater Anarchist scene. Generally I do this to provide the context to understand why one publication or another merits your attention. Other times I just do it for the laughs. That texture hides from the review the wonder I had when I first started to pick up these periodicals. These magazines, and the people who contributed to them, expressed what I only wished I could express at that point in my life. *Anarchy (AJODA)* filled me with just such awe because I had absolutely no idea what it was talking about, but I knew that I wanted to. Slowly, I examined each author, just like I used to chase down the thanks lists of the first records that I owned, and their sources, until I felt like I understood what in the fuck these people were talking about. This issue uses too much space (a long article and an editorial) talking about a war that I believe anarchists would have better ignored (or better yet, leveraged for our purposes instead of protesting theirs). There are the usual in-depth reviews of anarchist books that have come out over the past six months (including two on Spain), periodicals (with the expected internecine feuds), and a letter section that would choke a Maoist. (AR)
PO Box 1446 / Columbia, MO 65205-1446

BLACK LUNG #9 / $4
11 x 8 - copied - 60 pgs - French
Great zine from the Paris region that focuses on DIY hardcore. This issue includes interviews with The Haggard, Action Fall Short, Young Wasteners, Fast Kids On Cocaine, One More Season, and Spitting Teeth. There are some good columns and plenty of new record reviews. This zine is a fun read, and not for the homophobic. (HH)
Alex Simon / 57 avenue du General Morand / 91600 Saviguy / Orge / France
blacklung77@hotmail.com

THE BROADSLIDE #4 / $1
8.5 x 11 - copied - 20 pgs
Slightly dated (but still relevant) essays on the effects of the recent military actions in Iraq make up the bulk of this personal/political zine. Includes excerpts from writing by the inimitable Mimi Nguyen, local rocker Chris Touchton, and Jello Biafra. (SD)
PO Box 329 / Columbia, MO 65205-0329

CHAINBREAKER #1 / $2
7 x 8.5 - copied - 40 pgs
Chainbreaker is one of those zines that you keep. I mean you have it forever, *and* you pull it out every couple of months to look up something. It's collaboratively written by a group of bicycle geeks (that is a good thing!) who want to share their passion for bicycles with the public. From the well-detailed, easy-to-understand directions of how to fix a flat, to the history of bicycles and bicycle enthusiasts, there is no filler in this zine. Just a straight-up great read. And I dig the spraypainted cover and lovely illustrations. (SD)
Shelley / 621 North Rendon / New Orleans, LA 70119

LE CHIEN QUI PUE #4 / #4
8 x 6 - copied - 34 pgs - French
This zine is put out by the La Cerise collective. Anyone can submit articles or comics regardless of the language. The zine has grown to include a few scene reports and record reviews, but overall this is a comic book-style zine. The title means "The Stinking Dog." The zine itself will appeal to those who are interested in the anarchist and hardcore scenes. This collective also has an ongoing squat and does a radio show. DIY or DIE! (HH)
Narcay Yann / 9 rue du Clos / 75020 Paris / France

CONTRAVENÇÃO #1-5 / $2
8.5 x 11 - printed - 28 pgs each - Portuguese
These five issues, all released in 2002, are edited by Angelo Bruno, former bass player of Abuso Sonoro. Angelo has decided to try his hand in the zine world. The design, at least, was no object, since he's borrowed

most of the templates from either *MRR* or *Heartattack*. I mean, right down to the fonts used in the different sections. If only *MRR's* record reviewers could learn to format their reviews with as much faithfulness as Bruno! One thing that stands out, to me, is the really male aspect of this zine. I can't really read the columns or anything, but it feels like they're whipping it out right and left. Each issue has one or two band interviews, as well as a good selection (for a small zine) of international hardcore. Contravenção aims to be a *MRR*-style staple in the mind-bogglingly huge city of São Paulo, and I wish them luck. (AC)
Cx Postal 2098, Santos / São Paulo, 11060-870
www.contravencaozine.com.br / contravencao@contravencaozine.com.br

CONTRE CULTURE #2 / $3
11 x 8 - copied - 32 pgs
A totally hardcore, anarchist punk publication that includes reports on the political situations in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Nigeria. There are also interviews with the bands Foetus Party and New Winds. There is an article on punk and politics, and finally, there are lots of new record and zine reviews. This is a very good zine with lots of contact addresses in France. (HH)
ABC c/o Maloka / BP536 / 21014 Dijon cedex / France

CRUDE NOISE #3 / **NOSEDIVE** #12 / $2
7 x 8.5 - copied - 40 pgs
You have to get this split zine by Merry Death and Icky. I mean it. There is no excuse. Here is a collection of all of the amazing linoleum prints that they have done over the past few years accompanied by anecdotes and stories that make you want to jump out of your chair and make your own art, or at least make your bed and ride your bike. Explored is a serious thread of social thought, contemporary punk history, and personal growth coupled with a level of skill, thought, and time that blows my mind. Put down this copy of *MRR* and send away for this zine right now. (SD)
Icky c/o Eric / PO Box 44254 / Detroit, MI 48244

CULTURE HACK / 74¢ postage
8.5 x 11 - copied - 20 pgs
The medium is the message—"this zine was made entirely with stolen materials, and is free!"—but the message is pretty straightforward as well. Live well with garbage, interact with people, see the shortcomings of punk and drugs—these ideas are articulated herein. If the first issue of *Scam* was written as a manifesto, after only two Schliltz, it would be similar to this. A fucking bargain for two stamps. (JM)
Kevin von Mutant / 1036 Edgemont St. / San Diego, CA 92102

DEFIANT POSE #6 / $5
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 76 pgs
Heavy, solid, and with a massive amount of compressed text to decipher. Issue #6 of this London zine is devoted to the Los Angeles punk uprising of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and manages to force a huge amount of information into not a lotta space. Features a nice centerfold map of the area (good idea) and features on the infamous Mystic Records, Dave Markey of Sin 34 and *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* fame, period fanzines, scenester Iris Berry of the Ringling Sisters, the Weirdos, and a clutch of xeroxed images and art that capture the chaotic mess of the period. Highly impressive "love letter" to a scene that went the way of the dodo around the time the Red Hot Chili Peppers were signed and X split for the first time: a highly useful read. (JH)
PO Box 2544 / London / NW6 3DF UK

DUNK AND PISS #10 / $1
4.5 x 5.5 - copied - 30 pgs
High school students make for great zine writers at times, due to that fresh grasp of the English language, that blissful exuberance and limitless energy to all new experiences, and the smart-ass wit that is developed and keenly honed in afternoon detention and boring math classes. Yet there is the obvious digression into too-long talks of tour or banal drug freakouts, yes loaded with the appropriate amount of sarcasm, but oft littered with unnecessary details and inside jokes. I let this slide while reading *Dunk and Piss*, and go for the more visceral glory that youth provokes. Issue 10 diverges from the usual format of Alex's tales by adding a number of guest columns by his friends. (SD)
11 Alger Dr / Rochester, NY 14624

DUNK AND PISS #11 / $1
4.5 x 5.5 - copied - 62 pgs
Back to Alex's tales of Upstate New York teendom. I seem to listen to Dag Nasty when I write my zines reviews and it sweetly accompanies these short tales of angst and idiocy. Check it out for the hilarious tale of creating a bomb scare with a bag of zines. Hah! Hey Alex, seriously though, lay off the judgmental statements in regards to people's body types—"fat" or "obese" for description, but not as identification. Come on; you're creative. (SD)
11 Alger Dr / Rochester, NY 14624

THE EAST VILLAGE INKY #19 / $2
4.25 x 5.5 - copied - 20 pgs
If your lazy ass still hasn't sought out or run across of copy of this fun-filled cartoon splendor, then you should get up off the damn toilet and bend over the rim of the damn bathtub and administer a stern spanking! I mean it! No excuses! This issue is just as hilarious and tangent-driven as ever, including how to go to a protest with your children and a home-hitting rendition of *Our Town* as it pertains to the goings-on of the fine family reared by our dear comic genius. I swear, if Ayun could cram any more personality into these tiny pages, she'd be the inventor of a shrinking machine. I finished so fast I had only gone through two rounds of nose-picking. Luuuuuuuuv-it. (JB)
Ayun Halliday / PO Box 22754 / Brooklyn, NY 11202
Inky@erols.com / ayunhalliday.com

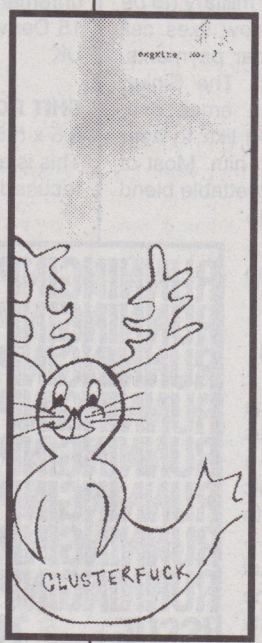
GET ON THE STAGE #9 / $6
11 x 8 - printed - 80 pgs - Serbo-Croatian
This zine from Serbia comes written in the Latin script so it is a bit easier to understand than the Cyrillic script. There are interviews with the bands Out Cold, US Bombs, Strung Out, Voodoo Glow Skulls, Six Pack, Tibia, On The Rise, and Hardsell. There are some columns and plenty of new record reviews. This zine is mostly for people in Serbia to know what is happening outside of their country, but the zine comes with a CD sampler that features several Serbian bands that contains some pretty good tracks worth listening to more than once. Definitely worth checking out! (HH)
Vladimir Orescanin / Aleksandra Stojanovica 9 / 22300 Stara Pazova / Serbia

GOD KWIT #2 / $1
4 x 5.5 - copied - 30 pgs
A mere 30 pages (and small pages at that) but *God Kwit* still manages to leave a lasting impression on this reader. The cover boldly proclaims itself as "The Bible," but I wouldn't go that far...I've had some truck with this guy's previous efforts (*Drunk & Piss* 'zine, that is) and recognized 'em a mile away. Pissed teen rants, mainly. Sort of like intercepting notes passed in class. "I dreamt of sheep jumping over razor-blade fences," he writes. Some useful complaining, stolen skateboards, and pierced nipples. "I had solved something with violence," indeed. Fun fun fun. (JH)
953 Spencerport Rd / Rochester, NY 15606

KEEPSCHTUMM #6 / $3
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 20 pgs
I've been seeing *Keepschtumm* coming through for a while, this time I couldn't resist reading the Joe Strummer tribute issue. And while the Joe Strummer tribute is brief and not all that particularly interesting, the rest of the zine does OK with its blend of music, politics, and humor. This issue has interviews with Tsunami Bomb, Sick 56, and Stuntface, some British politics, and a little letter to our pal GWB. The only trouble I had with this zine was differentiating the articles from the ads. (CR)
33 Henry Taylor St / Fflintshie / CH6 5PP / Wales / UK

MYLXINE #16 / $2
7 x 9 - copied - 94 pgs
Dear readers, if ever in your zine-review-reading life you were enthused enough with someone's opinion on a zine to run out and cleverly conceal your two dollars and an emphatic note directly to the editor of some damn fine literature, then hark, hear my call on this one. You will not be sorry if you pick up *Mylxine*. Do not faint on your doorstep

because of the weight of this epic volume, nor be deterred by the word-heavy intensity of its exalted contents. Editor Scott is funny, endearing, and sharp as a safety pin infected with tetanus—deadly enough to make the devil's staple gun jealous. How can I recommend it enough? There is an interview with an underground paper editor from Pensacola during the 'Nam Years, the Sissies, and Thurston Moore; plus contributions from everybody's sweethearts Cindy Ovenrack, Christie Road, Adee, and others. There are articles about the Republican Nat'l Convention Protests, Dorothy Parker, the Haitian Revolution, and Paul Robeson. There is even *fiction* and it's actually *good*! If all that ain't enough to make a zine-lovin' fool's heart split in a contorted manifestation of glee—holy eff! There's more! Get this shit right now. (JB)



309 N 6th Ave / Pensacola, FL 32501
Mylxine@hotmail.com / www.23skidoo.org

NEGRITA #3 / $2
4 x 11 - copied - 43 pgs
This issue of *Negrita*, the first I've read, is subtitled "Clusterfuck." The spraypaint-enhanced cover predominately features a seal with antlers! As if picking a fight of sorts, editor Gloria keeps dropping the drawings of bunnies and ducks between and around her type- and handwritten prose. Ever been miserable and fought constantly, in a relationship, but stuck around anyway? In "Blenderiffic" Gloria expertly captures the cycle of near-violence, reconciliatory sex, and crippling self-doubt of a punk love affair turned sour. "Stoopid Things White People (Say)" this time around (it's an ongoing feature—go figure), discusses white folks who casually complain about being victimized in black neighborhoods. I appreciated *Negrita*'s passionate, funny voice all the way through, but most endearing, perhaps, were her hitchhiking and travel stories. Keep rolling, Gloria, or stay in Pensacola with the rest of the kids, but see if you can keep up the zine-writing while you're there. (AC)
Negrita c/o Overground Distro / PO Box 1661 / Pensacola, FL 32591

NORTH EAST PUNK FLYERS / $3
8.5 x 11 - printed - 44 pgs
Flyers are of course a part of our punk rock paper trail. They create a history that is slightly elusive, in that it marks a time and place but the actual sensations from the event are not evident; they are implied. Pat, the FNS guy, has compiled, with the help of a few friends, a collection of 80s fliers from around the Boston/Connecticut area. Some may be bored looking at old flyers, or some, like my friend Josh today, may be enthralled and totally excited about the possibilities of seeing some of the shows on these flyers. Artistically, some of these pieces are amazing, some are downright ridiculous, and are some downright dumb. Hey, how come no one puts the year on flyers anymore? (SD)
FNS Productions / PO Box 1299 / Boston, MA 02130

ONE WAY TICKET #2 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 54 pgs
I've been to Courtenay, over on Vancouver Island in British Colombia. My band played a show there and the kids were so hyper, so friendly, and so amazed that anyone would come all the way to their town. Reading *One Way Ticket* brought me instantly back to that summer and small town with its super-posi writing: thoughtful, at times overly introspective, but of course in that way where you can't help but be impressed by the level of candor one uses about their life. Julian digs deep into his psyche to come to grips with his place in the world of Anarchism, love, and punk rock. Something in here reminds me of that great Victoria-based zine *Red Pop Revenge,* with a dash of Travis Fristoe's *America?* The beautifully silk-screened cover, along with an alluring combination of black and white text, accom-

panied by many anatomical and clip art illustrations, makes for a cerebral read led by a clever use of aesthetically pleasing images. (SD)
Julian / 1111A 4th St / Courtenay, BC / V9N-1H6 / Canada

PAPING # 8 / $4
8.5 x 7.5 - copied - 52 pgs
Comics can be a disappointing read for me. Often I get the feeling that the energy and effort put forth by them is lacking somewhat. *Paping,* however, is a real fucking treat. This issue is comprised of contributions from some really great zine writers and artists. The stories range from the frustrations of being an elementary school teacher, walking through New York, imaginary cartoon friends, to a bit of praise for one's partner. It's a great zine that benefits from a great aesthetic. Make sure you get one of the copies with the silk-screened cover! (CR)
PO Box 128 / 45 E 7 Street / New York, NY 10003
speedymyshka@aol.com

POOR AND FORGOTTEN #19 / $1
7 x 8.5 - copied - 18 pgs
I love the music reviews that zines done by prisoners seem to perpetuate—great, hilarious reviews of whatever comes their way, brutally honest because there is no reason to be anything but. *Poor and Forgotten* combines a few poems with stories and graphics from whatever magazines editor Matt can get his hands on. The punk band word search entertained me for over a half-hour. (SD)
Poor and Forgotten c/o FNS Publishing / PO Box 1299 / Boston, MA 02130

PROFANE EXISTENCE #42 / free
17 x 11.5 - printed - 16 pgs
This issue of long-standing anarcho-punk favorite *Profane Existence* seems to be mostly about Gulf War II—columns, news articles, and photos all show how pissed off these Midwestern punx are about George W.'s latest blunder. There's also interviews with Provoked and the Subhumans (UK), tons of reviews, and an extensive scene report from the former USSR. If you like politics with your punk rock, you'll probably be into this. (CJ)
PO Box 8722 / Minneapolis, MN 55408
www.profaneexistence.com

RAUMSCHIFF WUCHERPREIS #11 / $4
11 x 8 - printed - 60 pgs - German
The scumfuck tradition continues with this latest edition that includes interviews with the Smelly Anchors, Frontal, and V8Wankers. There are a couple of columns and scene reports, but most of all there are plenty of new record reviews and an extensive catalogue of new records and CDs to buy. This zine hopes for a mild spring, a hot summer, and a disarmed USA. Unfortunately, the majority of Americans are stupid and selfish, so the hot summer will probably be just more war. Peace now! (HH)
Schmitz / Postfach 100709 / 46527 Dinslaken / Germany
wucher99@aol.com

RUN AGROUND #2 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 44 pgs
Computers are both a boon and a curse to the zine. In this case, the "creative" layout made my tired eyes miss the thought stream over and over again, like reading a comic book where the pithy comments always followed knock-out blows. I guess this figures since Dan Sinker (*Punk Planet*) was interviewed. Maybe the post-PageMaker set is plotting the entire separation of form from content out of desperation of these times, where there is so little being said. There is a really nice, biting, and painful bit from a (now ex) punk who joined the military (to be able to go to college) and now fixes cell phones for Verizon, makes car payments, and prepares for Iraq. Ouch. The Sinker interview was really just an email one, which is a shame, as I would like to hear more non-editorial-voice from him. Most of the rest of the content is a forgettable blend of journal, fiction, and half-assed commentary. (AR)
10 Pearson Rd / Preston Hollow, NY

RUNNING IN PLACE #3 / $1
8.5 x 11 - copied - 40 pgs
There's nothing wrong with the local zine. This is about Las Vegas, which seems to have a pretty vital and eclectic music scene. Lots of interviews with local Las Vegas bands—Folsom, Faded Grey, and Loud Pipes are represented. None of the content is particularly gripping, but there is a rather funny story about how the author was visiting Philadelphia, didn't have a place to stay, and ended up paying $20 to stay in some stranger's van. Kind of makes me think about all the stories that Iggy and Aaron never let out of the bag... (AR)
Bobby Franks / 4864 Yuma Ave / Las Vegas, NV 89104

RUNNING ON EMPTY #1 / $3
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 34 pgs
Remarkably well-organized for a first issue, this zine gives you short columns, music news, band interviews (Slingshot Around the Moon, Mercury Tilt Switch, Ignition,

3dbs Down), record reviews, and even some jokes for good measure. The interviews tended to get a little long-winded, but I might not have thought so if I knew who the bands were. A good first effort, but unremarkable. (CJ)
15 Denver Rd / Dartford / Kent / DA1 3LA UK

SHIT POP #1 / $2, ¥200, or trade
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 34 pgs
This is a rad semi-bilingual zine from Japan focused on worldwide anarcho-feminist actions. Not being able to read Japanese, I couldn't understand a lot of it, but what I could read was totally positive and even inspirational at times. It's encouraging to know that girls all over the world are doing awesome shit like this. (CJ)
33 Sakawaki cho Hinooka / Apt A, Yamasina-ku / Kyoto-shi, Japan 607-8496

SKITEATER #8 / free
8.5 x 11 - copied - 2 pgs
Small, intimate, compact. Two sides of one sheet of paper, crammed with scary hardcore grind and drawings of cracked skulls...the white type on (almost) totally black paper seems highly appropriate, as this is toilet reading for the apocalypse. The "staying punk" editorial is just the kind of

thing I needed to hear on this day of all days, as I sit trapped in an office cube. Best quote: "Christianity is just as fucked as the Internet." (JH)
152 Gostlin / Hammond, IN 46327

SLINGSHOT #78 / $2
11 x 17 - printed - 16 pgs
I always like reading *Slingshot* and it is a consistent paper. The settings might change, but some of the topics remain—getting ready to disrupt a WTO meeting (Sacramento and Cancun this time), protest news (SF Bay Area, France, Iran), etc. Call me shallow, but this issue I was impressed with the stylin' pseudonyms used by the contributors—P. and S. Wingnut (siblings?), Puddin Snax, Cassandra Camus, Noam Chomsky—well maybe that last one is real. This issue also features a section in Spanish, a poster, and plenty more news and analysis. (JM)
c/o Long Haul / 3124 Shattuck Ave / Berkeley, CA 94705

SLOUCH #4 / $2.50
7 x 8.5 - printed - 27 pgs
It's disturbing when a zine is published from your own town, and has even been around for sort of a while, and you haven't run across it. Especially when the zine has noteworthy contents, like *Slouch* does. Granted, it's a big enough town, but I've decided to blame it instead on the fact that musically speaking, this isn't really a punk zine—instead it's got a rarefied post-indie vibe, illustrated here by an eyelash-batting interview with Silkworm. The editors have a nose for good writing, and have selected a handful of voices that carry you through without a hitch, with the possible exception of the Internet poetry, or whatever it is. In a scathing open letter, San Francisco father Bernard Marszalek thanks "Former Governor" GW Bush for politicizing his son in the days following the outbreak of war in Iraq. Marty Wood tears into Diesel Clothing's obscene exploitation of revolutionary imagery to market sweatshop

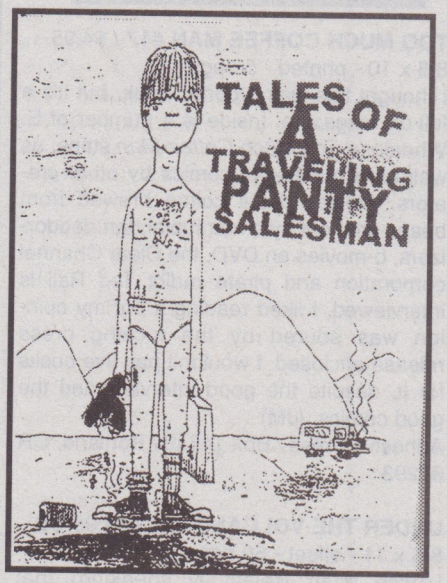
clothes. This issue's centerpiece is a remarkable short story entitled "Open Letter to Eddie Pepito," in which Jef Samp experiments with his own emotional isolation via a series mysterious calls placed for "Pepito" on his new phone line. What a good writer—wonder if he does another zine I ought to know about? The editors themselves do a good job of "touching up" news bites. It's a little pricey, this one, but it does have some guts. (AC)
1700 Golden Gate Ave #24 / San Francisco, CA 94115
www.momireadslouch.net / slouch@speakeasy.net

SLUG AND LETTUCE #75 / 37¢
12.5 x 16 - printed - 19 pgs
I always seem to have a copy of *Slug and Lettuce* at the bottom of my bag for at least a month after it comes out. It is one of those comfort zines: dependable and always giving you what you expect in regards to informed reviews, articulate and motivating columns, and of course another installment of Fly's comic "Zero Content." In this spring issue, most of the columns focus on coping and understanding our current war-crazy nation, thereby creating a good solid issue of *S&L*. (SD)
PO Box 26632 / Richmond, VA 23261-6632

SNEER-ZINE #2 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 32 pgs
Muffin writes about a number of ludicrous topics in a self-righteous tone that implies that she gets a lot of shit for her viewpoints. She is pro-meat eating, pro-masturbation (well, who isn't), and aggro about children's songs. Yes, this zine is random, funny at times, and obviously put together rather quickly. Includes some reviews, an interview, and games. (SD)
PO Box 542 / Nutley, NJ 07110

STRAINT #6 / $1
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 20 pgs
Depression and fanzines go together like punks and infighting, but rarely do I read a zine where depression is confronted in such an overarching manner. Lane recounts his experience with depression and the solace he has found through medication. It's kind of a life-affirming issue, with writings about masculinity, poverty, and religion, all with the theme of depression running throughout. An interesting read, even if some of the conclusions and opinions left me feeling a little bothered. (CR)
Lane Van Ham / 1141 E Adams #6 / Tucson, AZ 85719

TALES OF A TRAVELING PANTY SALESMAN #1 / $2
4.25 x 5.5 - copied - 79 pgs
Except for the once-in-awhile moments everyone experiences that don't sound good in print (because of their lack of specificity, not to be confused with the ever-unattainable universalism which makes for the genius of the fanzines we know and adore), this tour-inspired collection of stories keeps the ball rolling. We follow Lew and Dirt Bike Annie on a tour of the country and the disasters and triumphs that ensue. Occasional laughs, plus some celebratory achievements, and an opinion about practically every state—Lew is a pretty good writer. Included are one-liners that require re-reading, and *almost* there descriptions that



make me think that if this kid sticks around, his future zines will be a pleasure to read. His enthusiasm merits a sheepish applause, if not a shaking of the head and a wide stretching of lips across bared teeth. (JB)
Lew Houston / 135 Wapwallopen Rd / Nescopeck, PA 18635
Vinylagogo.com

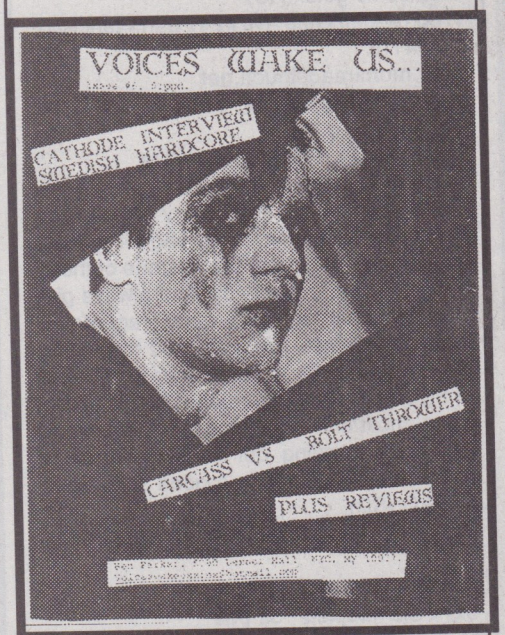
TEENAGE DEATH SONGS #15 / $2
8.5 x 7 - copied - 28 pgs
Certainly this is not any easy zine to read. In it, Tennessee recounts the passing and life of his close friend Sera. Through her story and his story of dealing with grief, he develops a portrait of despair and what becomes of us as we get older. There is a lot of pain in this zine, but through it, he is able to express the confusion and guilt that we feel as we realize that the life we are living may not always compare greatly to the life we once lived and the ideals we espoused. It's a difficult read, but it has a power that I don't usually expect a zine to carry. (CR)
Tennessee Jones / 1090 Greene Ave / Brooklyn, NY 11221
Tennessee@softskull.com

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN #17 / $4.95
8.5 x 10 - printed - 52 pgs
I thought this was a comic book, but it's a full-on magazine. Inside is a number of S. Wheeler's *Too Much Coffee Man* strips, as well as a number of comics by other creators. Articles detail coffee brewed from beans shat out by a marsupial, fart deodorizers, b-movies on DVD, the Clear Channel corporation and pirate radio; Ted Rall is interviewed. I liked reading it but my opinion was soured by the fucking press release enclosed. I wouldn't pay five bucks for it, despite the good interview and the good comics. (JM)
Adhesive Press / Box 14549 / Portland, OR 97293

UNDER THE VOLCANO #73 / $2.95 US
8.5 x 11 - offset - 50 pgs
Lavish affair (relatively speaking) that boasts a full-color cover pic of the Swingin' Utters, Chunksaah Records, Further Seems Forever, Manda & the Marbles, Movielife, and a large helping of audio reviews. A wee bit short on content (and long on ads) for the amount of paper it comprises. (JH)
PO Box 236 / Nesconset, NY 11767
www.underthevolcano.net

VOICES WAKE US... #6 / $1
8.5 x 11 - copied - 22 pgs
The product of applying an obsessively analytical and scholastic mindset to a relatively narrow spectrum of punk and metal records. Ben obviously knows his shit, and it shows in his well-referenced record reviews and writing on the eternal (?) question of Carcass vs. Bolt Thrower. This zine kind of reminds me of *Game of the Arseholes,* but with the emphasis more on the metal/grindcore/etc. end of things, (although there is an excellent article on Swedish hardcore). Come on, record reviews are just more fun to read when they use words like "delicious" and "impenetrable." (CJ)
5290 Lerner Hall / New York, NY 10027

WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE Vol. 3, #3 / $1
8.5 x 11 - copied - 16 pgs
Strange to get a copy of this magazine almost a year after it was published. I own at least three issues newer than this one. The editor of this magazine is one of the most prolific anarchist writer/theorist/translators in the United States. His interest is in the (mostly) Italian anarchist tendency called Insurrectionary Anarchism. *Willful Disobedience* is his venue for translations from the Italian, commentary on the US Anarchist scene (in this issue yet another barb is thrown at the "primitivists"), and



essays on the Insurrectionary tendency. To some extent, each issue also covers a certain amount of basic ground concerning what exactly it means to be an anarchist in the first place. This issue covers property, praxis, specialization, and "membership" anarchism. Generally the first three or four issues that you pick up will leave you a bit confused as the author (and the milieu) have a certain cadence and vernacular that, while evocative, is also a barrier. Recommended. (AR)
PO Box 31098 / Los Angeles, CA 90031

WITCH / WIEDZMA #4 / 1,5 Euros
8 x 11.5 - copied - 52 pgs - Polish
This isn't a split in the usual sense of the word. It's the same zine in Polish and in English, set back to back, one upside down in respect to the other. I was pleased to see that what initially looked like a glossy black metal fanzine was actually an "anarcho-feminist zine," with features of interest to radical women in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. *Witch* starts right off with an "Anarchofeminist Manifesto," then immediately goes into the meat of the issue: a long look at anti-abortion regulations in Poland and how they have affected women's health and lives. In the course of this discussion, editors interview Pro Femina, a women's rights group, and cover the "abortion underground." This was instructive about how the Pope and the Polish Catholic church flex muscle against women, instead of our Christian Right. In fact, I was struck by my ignorance of and interest in Eastern European feminist movements several times while reading *Witch*, which also covers an anarcho-feminist festival in Slovenia, a group called Girls in Action, and more. Band interviews include Harum Scarum, Antichrist, Hate to State, etc. A valuable resource from a rare perspective. (AC)
Wiedzma / PO Box 33 / 21-500 Biala Poolaska / Poland
wichgrrrl@pocita.ohet.pl

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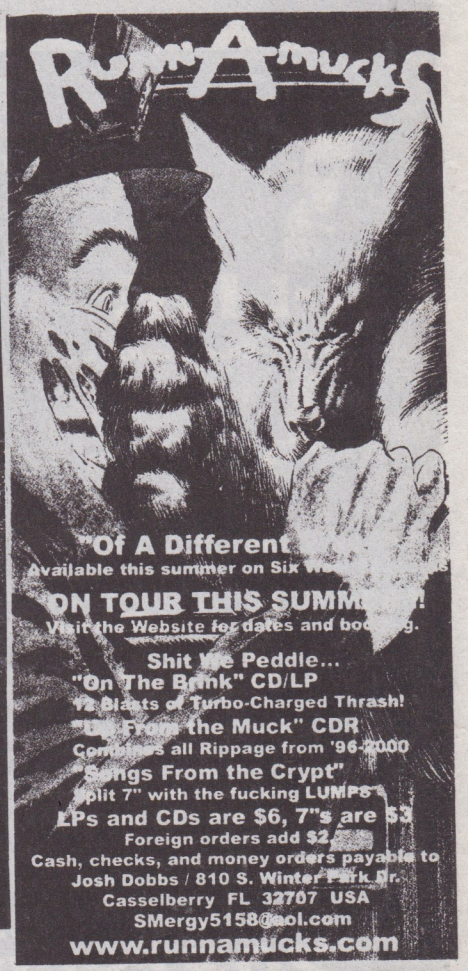

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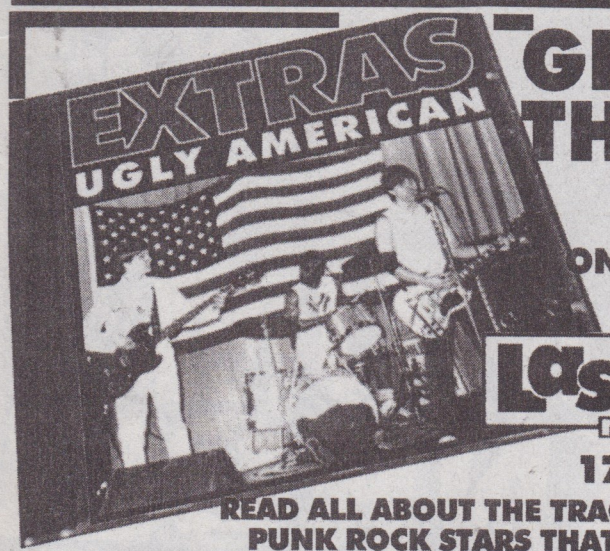

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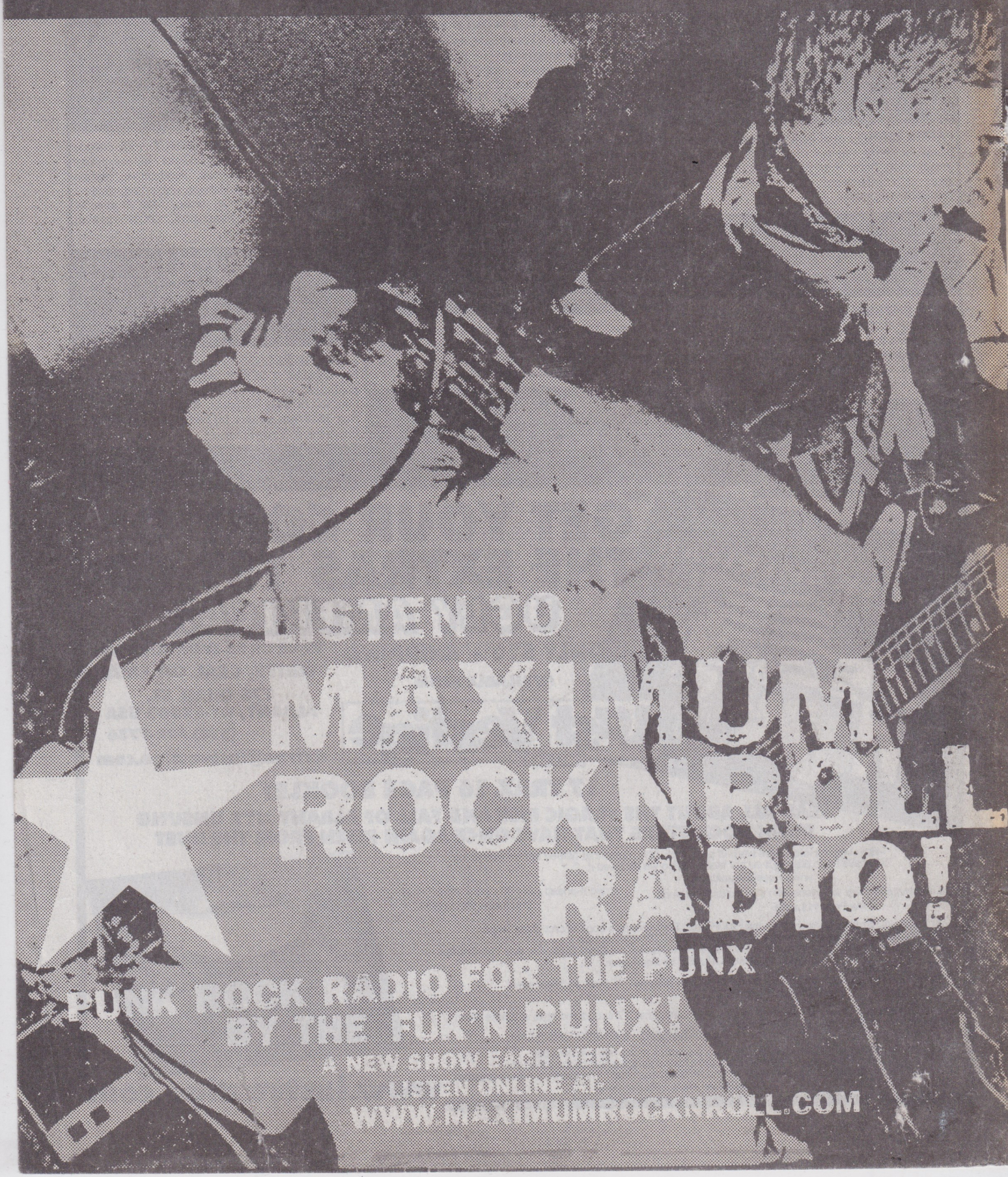
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